

# THE PANJAB PAST AND PRESENT

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October 1986

Serial No. 40

*Edited by*  
GANDA SINGH



DEPARTMENT OF PUNJAB HISTORICAL STUDIES  
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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## The Life and Times of Miyan Mir

DR SURINDER SINGH\*

The mystical dimension of Islam, known as *tasawwuf*, developed in western Asia from the seventh century onwards. The early Muslim mystics of the *sufis* sought inspiration from the Quran and the *sunnah* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad) in order to achieve spiritual communion with God, which was an intensely personal experience. With the spread of Islam to the Mediterranean in the west and to the Bay of Bengal in the east, the Islamic mysticism imbibed a number of new ideas from Hellenism, Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Buddhism and Vedanta. Notwithstanding the diverse nature of their religious influences, all Muslim mystics endeavoured to bring, through a process of self-discipline, their words, actions and thoughts into complete harmony with the Divine will. Besides, they laid great emphasis on the love of God, the suppression of wordly desires and the practice of piety. These common features, however, did not prevent the mystical movement to branch out, by the twelfth century, into as many as twelve *silsilas* (orders of fraternities).<sup>1</sup> With the passage of time, each *silsila* evolved its own system of devotional ceremonies and spiritual exercises, which was followed wherever its adherents were found.

The most widespread and probably the oldest of such *silsilas* was the Qadiriyya. Founded in Iraq by Abdul Qadir Jilani (A.D. 1077-1166), it advocated a dissuasion from worldliness and attached much importance to piety and humanitarianism.<sup>2</sup> The order acquired great prestige and popularity with the initiation in it of Ibn-i-Arabi (A.D. 1165-1240), one of the greatest Muslim thinkers of all times. His pantheistic doctrine of *wahadat-ul-wajud* (unity of existence)—according to which Man was the microcosm in which all the divine attributes were united and in Man alone did God become fully conscious of

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1. A detailed discussion of these orders is found in Ali Bin Usman Hujwari, *Kashf-ul-Mahjub*, Urdu tr., Syed Muhammad Ahmed Qadiri, Lahore, 1983, pp. 338-486.
2. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, London, 1966, pp. 158-159.

Himself<sup>3</sup>.....was adopted by the Qadirites<sup>4</sup> as their creed. The annexation of the north-western segment of the Indian sub-continent to the Ghaznavide empire, followed by the large-scale migration of Muslim fugitives from the lands conquered by Halaku in the middle of the thirteenth century, prepared the ground for the establishment of the various mystic orders in this region. However, the Qadiriyya *silsila* appeared here only in the later half of the fifteenth century, when Shaikh Muhammad Hussaini and his descendants made Uch the centre of their activities.<sup>4</sup> It was from Uch that the *silsila* travelled northwards to the Mughal province of Punjab. Abdul Qadir Badauni's reference to Shaikh Daud (d. 1575 A.D.) of Jheni (a town attached to the district of Lahore) as the founder of the Qadiriyya order is, admittedly, incorrect; yet it indicates the services rendered by him to the consolidation of the *silsila* in the region. Having received his formal education at Lahore under Maulana Ismail of Uch, he settled at Shergarh (fifteen miles north of Dipalpur) and began to propagate Qadiriyya doctrine at the advice of Shaikh Hamid Qadiri of Uch, who was a direct descendant of Shaikh Muhammad Husaini.<sup>5</sup> His mystical experience have been recounted in a book entitled *Naghmat-i-Daudi*, written by his nephew, son-in-law and spiritual successor named Shaikh Abul Maali, who also composed mystical verses under the nom-de-plume of *Ghurbati*.<sup>6</sup> Shaikh Abu Ishaq, another prominent disciple of Shaikh Daud, attracted the attention of his contemporaries on account of the influence he enjoyed in the environs of the city of Lahore.<sup>7</sup> Shaikh Bilawal Qadiri (d. 1637 A.D.), a disciple of Shamsuddin Qadiri of Lahore, acquired some eminence in the mystic circles as well as the common people due to his strict adherence to the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujud* and his alleged power of working miracles.<sup>8</sup>

3. R.A. Nicholson, 'Mysticism' in Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume (Eds.), *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford, 1947, p. 224.

4. Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehalvi, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, New Delhi, 1914, pp. 202-207.

5. Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. III, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1869, pp. 28-39.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 120.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

8. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshah Nama*, Vol. I, Part II, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1867, p. 334 (hereafter cited as *Badshah Nama*); Muhammad Saleh Kambo, *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 366-67 (hereafter cited as *Amal-i-Saleh*); Mufi Muhammad Ghulam Sarwar, *Khazinat-ul-Asfiya*, Vol. I, Kanpur, 1894, pp. 161-63 (hereafter cited as *Khazinat-ul-Asfiya*).

It was under the stewardship of Miyan Mir (A.D. 1550-1635) that the Qadiriyya *silsila* attained its zenith in the Mughal province of Punjab. An ontological monist deeply under the influence of Ibn-i-Arabi,<sup>9</sup> Miyan Mir excelled his predecessors and contemporaries in his contribution to the mystic movement in the region. He had mastered the theological and mystical branches of knowledge, so that the *ulama* of the day recognised his scholarly attainments without any hesitation. Since he was an ardent follower of the *shariat*, no one dared to raise any objection to the nature of spiritual exercises undertaken by him. His qualities as a spiritual preceptor attracted a large number of disciples from the different parts of the Mughal empire and even outside it. Though he spurned all social contacts and publicity, his influence did not fail to reach the rulers, princes and nobles, who deemed it a privilege to pay their homage to him. Moreover, the breadth of his outlook and the catholicity of his approach, endeared him to the non-Muslim groups. It is no wonder that Dara Shikoh (A. D. 1615-1659) was able to record that out of the four leading mystic orders of his times—Qadiriyya, Chistiyya, Naqshbandiyya and Kubrawiyya—the Qadiriyya had emerged as the most dominant. Though much of this achievement has been rightly attributed to the eminence of its founder, Abdul Qadir Jilani,<sup>10</sup> yet Miyan Mir's contribution was no less significant, particularly in the context of the north-western part of the Indian sub-continent.

The real name of Miyan Mir was Mir Muhammad but he was addressed by his companions, disciples and admirers as Miyan Jio.<sup>11</sup> He was born in A.H. 938 (A.D. 1531) at Siwistan,<sup>12</sup> a town situated between Thatta and Bhakkar. Since he grew up to the years of discretion in this region, he often conversed in the Sindhi dialect. His father, Qazi Sayin Ditta bin Qazi Qalandar Faruqi, was a mystic of high stature and was said to possess miraculous powers. His mother, Bibi Fatima (the daughter of Qazi Qadin, a renowned scholar

9. Aziz Ahmed, *An Intellectual History of Islam in India*, Edinburgh, 1969, p. 42.

10. Dara Shikoh, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, Tehran, 1965, pp. 13-19 (hereafter cited as *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*).

11. Dara Shikoh, the biographer of the saint, has invariably referred to him as Miyan Jio.

12. According to another version, which appears to be more authentic, the Miyan was born in 957 A.H./1550 A.D.; *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 95; Dara Shikoh, *Safinat-ul-Auliya*, Urdu tr., Muhammad Ali Lutfi, Karachi, 1961, p. 101 (hereafter cited as *Safinat-ul-Auliya*).



who had chosen the path of mysticism) was verily the 'Rabiya of the age.' It was believed that Miyan Mir stood in the twenty-eighth generation of Umar Faruq, the second caliph. The Miyan has related the following anecdote about his birth. "My mother who was herself a *sahib-i-kashf*, realized at the birth of my elder brother that he would not acquire any spiritual qualities. Therefore, she prayed to God for the boon of another son who should be an *arif-o-tarik* (gnostic and ascetic) and who should be completely immersed in His thought. A super-natural voice told her that God would grant her a son and a daughter possessing these characteristics. And this actually happened." Thus, Miyan Mir was the second child of his parents and was born after Lutfullah, who had died within a few days after his birth. The Miyan was followed by four brothers and two sisters, namely Qazi Bolan, Qazi Tahir, Qazi Muhammad (all of whom became the disciples of Miyan Mir, later on) Bibi Jamal Khatun and Bibi Badi.<sup>13</sup>

Miyan Mir appears to have been a precocious child. Having lost his father at the age of seven, he started learning *ilm-i-batin* (mystical knowledge) from his mother five years later. Soon after, he acquired such proficiency in this branch of knowledge that *alam-i-malkut* (the astro-mental plane) was revealed on him. Subsequently, he severed all worldly connections, and with the permission of his mother, left his home in order to engage himself in travelling and meditation. This event took place, when the boy had not even reached the stage of puberty. It was in the hills of Siwistan that he met Shaikh Khizar, who had identified himself with the Qadiriyya *silsila*.<sup>14</sup> As a matter of principle, the latter did not accept anything in charity, not even the offerings of *zakat*. Every winter he shifted himself to the hills of Siwistan and lived a solitary existence, unknown to the whole world. He satisfied his hunger with wild fruit and wore a small piece of cloth, which covered his body from the waist downwards to the knees. In order to protect himself from the cold, he had dug a *tanur* (oven) in which he burnt the wood collected from the jungle. He spent the winter nights inside the oven. He kept away from the company of the people and went to the town once or twice a year and that too for the purpose of *sair*. Miyan Mir has described his meeting

13. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 26-27 ; *Badshah Nama*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 330 ; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 364 ; *Khazinat-ul-Asfiya*, Vol. I, p. 154.

14. *Khazinat-ul-Asfiya*, Vol. I, pp. 136-37.

with the Shaikh in the following words :

“After bidding farewell to my mother, I left my home with a lot of enthusiasm in my heart. I kept on travelling through the woods, till I reached Koh-i-Siwistan. I came upon an oven, which was covered from above. As I opened it, I found a large stone inside. Since the oven was hot from within, I realized that the place had been improvised by some *Mard-i-buzurg* (saint) as his abode for the cold weather. Soon I was overpowered by the desire to see the saint in person and I decided not to leave the place till I had met him. I spent three days in hunger and thirst. As it was biting cold in the open, I was tempted to enter the oven. But I desisted from doing so, having realized that it was improper to use a place which belonged to a great man. When three days and nights went by, Hazrat Shaikh Khizar returned from his sojourn. As I saluted him, he said “*wa alaikum al-salama ya Mir Muhammad.*” I was greatly impressed by the mention of my name. The Shaikh asked me as to when I had come. I replied that I have been waiting for his return for the last three days and nights. The Shaikh said that he left the place the same day, but had not seen me. When I insisted politely that I was not wrong, he agreed with me. It is quite obvious that the Shaikh could not keep count of the passing days owing to the state of *istaghraq* (self-annihilation) in which he remained at all times. Thereafter, he took me as his disciple and initiated me into the path of meditation. In a short time, I reached the higher stages of mysticism, where every thing other than God was swept away from my heart.”<sup>15</sup>

According to Dara Shikoh, though Miyan Mir outwardly received formal spiritual training under the guidance of Shaikh Khizar, he (being an *Uwaisi*) got mystical instructions from the *ruhaniyat* (soul) of Abdul Qadir Jilani, one of the greatest mystics of all times. Miyan Mir believed that a similar relationship existed between Abdul Qadir Jilani and Prophet Muhammad. According to Shaikh Fariduddin Attar<sup>16</sup> (quoted in *Nafhat-ul-Uns*), *Uwaisi* was one who did not stand in

15. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 27-29 ; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 364 ; *Khazinat-ul-Asfiya*, Vol. I, p. 154.

16. For a biographical sketch of Fariduddin Attar, see, J.A. Subhan, *Sufism : Its Saints and Shrines*, Lucknow, 1960, pp. 31-35.

need of any spiritual preceptor in human form,<sup>17</sup> but who was instructed by Prophet Muhammad even in the absence of the latter's physical being. However, the position of *Uwaisi* was possessed only in very rare cases. Anyhow, there were saints who followed the Prophet's example, and instructed their disciples through their *ruhaniyat* and not through their actual presence. Seen in this context, Miyan Mir was an *Uwaisi* of the Prophet.<sup>18</sup>

After having completed his training—which consisted of *riyazat* (discipline) and *mujahida* (self-mortification)—under the tutelage of Shaikh Khizar, Miyan Mir was allowed to leave and settle anywhere he liked. He assumed the guise of a lone traveller and went towards Lahore, with the aim of acquiring *ilm-i-zahir* (exoteric knowledge). At this stage, his age was around twenty five years. Having reached Lahore, he lodged himself in the mosques of the city. Simultaneously, he started taking lessons from an outstanding scholar of Akbar's reign, Maulana Saadullah who specialized in *ilm-i-zahir* (exoteric knowledge) and *ilm-i-batin* (mystical knowledge). Miyan Mir was also reported to have studied for a number of years under Maulana Niamutullah (disciple of Maulana Saadullah and the teacher of Dara Shikoh's tutor, Shaikh Mirak) who, however, failed to discern the spiritual qualities possessed by his student.<sup>19</sup> In a short time, Miyan Mir acquired considerable proficiency in *maqul* (rational) and *manqul* (traditional) sciences. He could quote extensively from Ibn-i-Arabi's work *Futuhāt-i-Makkiyya* (Meccan Revelations). He had also committed to memory Jami's commentary on Ibn-i-Arabi's *Fassus-ul-Hikam* (Bezels of wisdom). The scholars of the day often sought his opinion on the intricate questions related to *tasawwuf* (mysticism).<sup>20</sup>

After completing his formal education, Miyan Mir started undertaking spiritual exercises. The *tariqah* (divine path) followed by

17. Abul Fazl (A.D. 1551-1602), a keen student of comparative religion, wrote "A *wali* (saint) should always wage a victorious war by circumspect conduct against the myriad disorders of the spirit, and never for an instant relax his attention from its deceptions. This lofty station is attainable by the grace of God and the guidance of fortune, and is sometimes to be reached through the spiritual powers of a meditator, and sometime without it. The latter state they call *Uwaysi* with reference to the example of *Uways Qarani*." Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, Eng. tr. H.S. Jarrett and J.N. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1948, p. 389.

18. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 29-30.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

20. *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 363.

him has been described, at length, in the *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*. He began his day by visiting the tombs of holy men. Then, accompanied by a few associates, he left for the woods and gardens. Each one of them sat separately under the shade of some tree and engaged himself in contemplation. However, they collected at one place at the time of *namaz*—a practice said to have been followed by Prophet Muhammad. In the words of Miyan Mir, "I found an old and deserted house in the outskirts of the city. For fifteen days, I went there regularly and mediated in solitude. But, at the end of this period, I felt that my concentration was being distracted. A *saqqa* (water-carrier) resided at a well which was located nearby. He knew that I had been coming there for a number of days. As I was leaving that place, he asked me the reason for my departure. I told him that I did not experience the usual peace and satisfaction. The *saqqa* told me that a marriage party had spent the previous night in merry-making at that very spot. I realized that the revellery of the visitors had left its mark even on that unfrequented place and had become the cause of my anxiety. Therefore, I left that place and began to search for another."<sup>21</sup>

Since Miyan Mir had attached himself to the Qadiriyya *silsila*, it was quite likely that he followed Qadiriyya system of meditation, an exposition of which was found in Dara Shikoh's *Risala-i-Haqnuma*. To begin with, the troubled soul of the novice found itself in the *alam-i-nasut* (physical plane). After having searched out a quiet and solitary place for mediation, he concentrated his attention on his heart in order to visualise the Beloved. The heart contained three centres of meditation—*dil-i-sanobari* (cedar heart), which did not correspond to the physical heart but signified the centre of man's astral body; *dil-i-mudawwari* (spherical heart) which was located in the centre of the brain and *dil-i-nilofari* (lily-heart), which was found in the rectal centre of the lower part of the body. The meditation on these three centres of the heart led the novice to *alam-i-misal* (plane of counterparts) which formed the gateway to *alam-i-malkut* (astromental plane). Meditation in this state consisted of *zikr-i-khafi* which meant the recitation of God's name mentally and slowly, without moving the tongue. It was followed by the practice of *habs-i-dam* or the regulation of breath. When both were combined with perfect concentration on the heart, the novice heard 'internal sounds' (known in the mystic parlance as the voice of silence), which were heard only

21. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 31-32.

by men of illumination. In order to undertake this kind of meditation, called *sultan-ul-azkar* (king of meditations), the novice proceeded to sit in a lonely spot, free from the haunts of men or to a cloister, and directed his attention to his ears with perfect concentration of his mind; then he heard a subtle sound which gradually became so powerful and overwhelming that it drew his mind away from his environment and submerged it into its own self. The third stage of meditation called *alam-i-jabrut* (plane of bliss) overpowered the novice in a trance-like wonder. In this condition, he brought all limbs of his body to a perfect rest, kept away from every kind of emotion, closed both eyes and placed right palm on the left and emptied the heart of all forms of physical and super-physical planes. After meditating in this posture, the novice reached the *alam-i-lahut* (plane of absolute truth) which enveloped the three lower planes (of *nasut*, *malkut* and *jabrut*), but remained uniform in its essential nature, leaving no scope for any modification. 'That is the first, that is the last, that is the manifest, that is the hidden and that with all other objects is cognisant.'<sup>22</sup>

According to another interpretation of Qadiriyya system of meditation, the novice was instructed to attain union with God by the practice of *yak zarbi*, *du zarbi*, *seh zarbi* and *chahar zarbi* methods of reciting the name of Allah, in a voice so pitched as not to rouse sleeping people. In *yak zarbi*, he repeated the word Allah with a certain pitch and length of voice from the heart and throat with emphasis once and then stopped until his breathing was regulated and then recited the word Allah and so on. In *zikh-i-du zarbi*, he sat in the posture of *namaz* and recited the name of Allah once turning his head to the right and again in the heart. In *zikh-i-seh zarbi*, he sat cross-legged and recited the name of Allah, first to the right, next to the left and thirdly in the heart with a loud voice. In *zikh-i-chahar-zarbi*, he sat cross-legged and recited the name of Allah first on the right, then on the left, thirdly in the heart and fourthly in the front with a loud voice. The novice was also taught to pronounce the words *la ilaha illilla* in a particular manner, sitting with closed eyes.<sup>23</sup>

After having lived at Lahore for some time, Miyan Mir shifted to

22. B.J. Hasrat, *Dara Shikuh : Life and Works*, second Revised edition, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 72-75.

23. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province*, Vol. I, Patjala, Rep., 1970, pp. 539-40.

Sirhind an important town on the Agra-Lahore highway.<sup>24</sup> During his one-year stay at this place, he was afflicted with a number of physical ailments, particularly a pain in the knees. The Miyan's misery was aggravated by the fact that there was no one to look after him in his illness. When Haji Niamatullah, a native of Sirhind, became aware of the Miyan's helplessness, he began to nurse the sick-man with utmost devotion; he even removed the Miyan's *fuzla* (excreta) with his own hands. Though the Miyan has attributed his recovery to the miraculous powers of Ghaus-i-Azam (Abdul Qadir Jilani) and Shaikh Khizar, the selfless service rendered by Haji Niamatullah can in no case be overlooked. It is no wonder that the Miyan offered to take the Haji as his first disciple in return for his humanitarian gesture. The offer was readily accepted by the Haji, who made a considerable progress after having spent only a week under the tutelage of Miyan Mir. On his return to Lahore, the latter took up his quarters at Muhalla Baghbana (also known as Khafipura) and lived there till the end of his life.<sup>25</sup> It was during this period that the metropolis of Lahore emerged as the leading centre of the Qadirites in the Mughal empire.

### III

Following the example of Shaikh Junaid Baghadadi and Abdul Qadir Jilani, Miyan Mir advocated a strict adherence to the *shariat* (the religious law of the Muslims).<sup>26</sup> For it constituted the first of the three stages in the path of *suluk* (mysticism), when the *salik* (seeker) faithfully adhered to all the obligations enjoined by Islam. As a result, the second stage, *tariqat* (the mystical process of reaching God) was reflected on the mirror of his heart. This condition involved the purification of the innerself from all evil intentions, comprehending the transitory nature of existence and obliterating every thing from the heart except God. A successful fulfilment of these conditions led to the removal of veil of human nature from his heart and ensured the revelation of the final stage, *haqiqat* (the ultimate reality) on him. Miyan Mir believed that human being was constituted of three elements—*nafs* (body), *dil* (heart) and *ruh* (soul). Each one of

24. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, Eng. Tr. H.S. Jarrett and Jadunath Sarkar, New Delhi, Rep., 1978, p. 286.

25. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 33-34; for more details, see, Fatima Zehra Bilgrami, 'Life and Teachings of Mian Mir,' M.Phil. dissertation, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 1976.

26. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 64, 67; *Safinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 102.

these could be reformed by observing the rules of the *shariat*, *tariqat* and *haqiqat* respectively.<sup>27</sup>

During the course of a conversation with Mulla Abdul Hakim Sialkoti, who was a renowned scholar and teacher,<sup>28</sup> Miyan Mir was reported to have said, 'There are two ways of achieving a union with God. The first is *jazba* (passion) by virtue of which God pulls the novice towards Himself in one spontaneous moment and absorbs him in His own Being. The second is *suluk* (the path of mysticism) in which the novice undergoes *riyazat* (discipline) and *mujahida* (self-mortification) under the guidance of a *buzurg* (holy man), and by doing so, experiences the revelation of the first stage of his journey called *alam-i-malkut*.<sup>29</sup> Thereafter, his *pir* (spiritual guide) directs him to leave for a jungle or a garden and to engage himself in solitary meditation.' The Mulla objected to this method on the ground that it demolished the purpose of *namaz-i-jamaat* (congregational prayer). Thereupon, Miyan Mir asserted that it was obligatory for a Muslim to understand the true nature of *namaz* and endeavour to achieve *huzur-i-qalb* (concentration of the mind), for these two conditions were more important than *namaz-i-jamaat*. Though it was true that he and his companions went to the woods and meditated while sitting away from one another, yet they collected at one place at the appropriate time and offered the congregational prayer, which was never allowed to lapse. In other words, the Miyan strongly disapproved of a *namaz* which was not free from *khatra* (distracting thought).<sup>30</sup> At the same time, he did not spend a single moment of his life without *huzur-i-qalb*.<sup>31</sup>

27. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 83. These were the three pillars on which the entire structure of *tasawwuf* was based; the sufis regarded *shariat* as a root, *tariqat* as the branch and *haqiqat* as the fruit of a tree. According to another interpretation, the orthodox sufis followed the Prophet, who declared that *shariat* was his word, *tariqat* was his action and *haqiqat* his inward self, R.S. Bhatnagar, *Dimensions of classical sufi thought*, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 20, 157.

28. Sujan Rai Bhandari, *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, Ed., M. Zafar Hasan, New Delhi, 1918, p. 73; *Badshah Nama*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 340; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, pp. 382-83; *Khazinat-ul-Asfiya*, Vol. II, p. 351.

29. It signified the celestial and angelic kingdom, which stood midway between *alam-i-nasut* (the world of humanity) and *alam-i-jabrut* (the world of divine omnipotence); S.A.A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1978, p. 234.

30. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 50-51.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Miyan Mir believed that a person who has chosen the path of *suluk* (mysticism) should be in a condition of constant communion with God. He often recited the following couplet, which meant that one who remained forgetful of God even for a moment became an infidel for that moment, though a hidden one.

*Kas-i-ku ghafil az haq yak zamanast*  
*Aan dam kafir ast amma nihan ast.*

Miyan Mir's *tawakkul* (absolute faith) in God was so strong that he would throw away the drinking water contained in a cup and placed by his side at night. He did not allow any *khatra* (distracting thought) to dilute his faith at any time.<sup>32</sup> He knew a number of ways to drive away *khatra* and often gave advice on this issue to his companions, none of whom was troubled by any *khatra*. According to Dara Shikoh, a *khatra* was caused by *khatir* (personal desires); when there was no such desire, there could be no *khatra* either; since the companions of Miyan Mir did not profess any desire, they were not troubled by any *khatra*.<sup>33</sup>

The possession of these characteristics enabled Miyan Mir to remain in a perpetual state of *istaghraq* (self annihilation), entirely oblivious of his physical environment. Indeed, it was difficult to appreciate the depth of his absorption in *mushahida* (contemplation). It was found that he often inquired about the day of the week and even the month of the year. Mulla Shah Badakhshi, the *pir* of Dara Shikoh, has stated that the Miyan remained so strongly entrenched in his *istaghraq* that he was often found unconscious of the peace of bread held in his hand while eating.<sup>34</sup>

Miyan Mir had severed all connections with the worldly affairs, as there was no need for a gnostic to look for popularity. He believed that one who possessed the knowledge of God did not require the knowledge of the world.<sup>35</sup> As such, he nurtured a strong aversion to the company of people. During the days of his youth, he spent the whole day in the jungles and gardens, when he returned to his *hujra* (cell) after the *namaz-i-maghrib*, he locked the door from inside. During

32. Once a government official requested Miyan Mir to remember him at his leisure. The Miyan promptly remarked, 'Curse that moment when your thought intrudes into my heart.' *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 46.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33; *Safinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 102.

34. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 46.

35. *Badshah Nama*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 330; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 364.



his old age, when his movements were restricted on account of pain in the knees, he confined himself within the *hujra* even during the day. In ordinary circumstances, he did not entertain any visitor. However, if a person insisted on seeing him, the Miyan allowed him to enter. He offered a prayer for the well-being of the visitor who was, then, expected to leave. The Miyan argued, 'I have to attend to my work and engagements just as you have. Go and engage yourself in your business so that I may also do likewise.'<sup>36</sup> Dara Shikoh has rightly stated that Miyan Mir had achieved considerable excellence in the practice of *tarko-tajrid* (renunciation and solitude).<sup>37</sup> In this context, it may be pointed out that he remained a life-long bachelor and thus absolved himself of all social obligations connected with married life.<sup>38</sup> This contention is illustrated by the following anecdote. Once the wife of Mulla Hamid Gujar (who was one of the *alims* of Lahore, but had taken to the path of mysticism in his later life) sent a complaint to Miyan Mir through Shaikh Daud Bhervi. She prayed that her husband took no interest in his household which was in a state of ruin and that she had virtually become a widow. The Miyan, however, expressed his helplessness in the matter, saying, 'It is a characteristic feature of our method that a *sahib-i-shugal* pays no attention to strangers.'<sup>39</sup>

Miyan Mir had secured absolute freedom from any attachment with *hasti-i-mauhum* (transient life). That he actually followed this principle becomes evident from the fact that he did not attach any significance to the visit of the Mughal emperor to his establishment and remained immersed in his usual pursuits. For, nothing except God penetrated his sight, as was the case with any *arif* (gnostic). In fact, the *nāzr* (sight) of such people ceased to belong to them. In *tasawwuf* (mysticism) and *tauhid* (belief in the unity of God or the fifth degree of perfection in the mystic path, where the divine essence is contemplated as void of any attribute conceived by thought), the distinction between nearness and separation, I and He, my conduct and its reward, and my prayer and its response, was obliterated. In this manner, Miyan Mir sought to achieve complete self-effacement. It is no wonder that he wanted to be buried after his death in *shorah zamin* (nitrous earth) so that no trace was left of his bones. While convers-

36. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 32, 44.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

38. *Ba'ishah Nama*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 330; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 364.

39. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 92.

ing with his companions, he often said, 'Do not sell my bones. Do not set up a shop over my grave, as it has been done in the case of others.' Many a times, he quoted Shaikh Abdul Hasan Khirqani's phrase, '*Sufi aan bud keh na bud*' (a mystic is one who possesses no existence). He went a step further by adding '*agar bud nabud*' (he should not exist even if he does).<sup>40</sup>

Miyan Mir did not claim any exalted social status for himself. He gave a similar advice to his companions in these words, 'Friends, to remove the love of social status from the heart is a big achievement. For, according to Prophet Mohammad, the last thing to leave the heads of the *siddiqs* (the truthful ones) is *hubb-i-jah* (love of status, rank, grandeur, magnificence) which was a big problem for them.' Miyan Mir's ideas in this regard can be gleaned from the following anecdote. Mulla Khwaja Bihari, a disciple of the Miyan, was sitting in his house along with some companions. All of a sudden, it appeared that roof was going to give way. The Mullah asked his friends to move out, and for his part, remained there and started reciting the *kalima-i-tayyibah* in a loud voice. When the roof came down, the Mulla was miraculously saved as two beams of wood fell over him, one above the other. The matter reached the ears of Miyan Mir who, instead of praising the Mulla, disapproved his action, saying, 'The craze for *jah* is present in him even at the time of a possible death ; why did he recite the *kalima-i-tayyibah* in a loud voice. He did so because he knew that the people would say that he (the Mullah) had God in his mind even at the moment of death. He should have recited it in a low pitch.'<sup>41</sup>

Miyan Mir was fond of listening to *naghma-i-Hindi* (songs, in, probably, the Hindustani language) which he understood with ease. Whenever, any *qawwal* (a singer of mystical verses) turned up a *sama* (audition party)<sup>42</sup> was also held. However, such occasions were rare. For, he did not keep any *qawwal* in his employ nor did he invite any one to visit him. During the course of these meetings, his face

40. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 51, 63.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

42. The principal, technical use of this word is undoubtedly in sufism, in which it means listening to music, singing, chanting and measured recitations in order to produce religious emotion and ecstasy, and all such performances by voice or instrument ; M.T. Houtsma, et al (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, London, 1934, p. 121 ; Also see, Syed Ali Bin Usman Hujwiri, *op. cit.*, p p. 601-31.

illuminated with happiness and the hair of his beard stood out one after the other. But he conducted himself with utmost dignity and did not make any physical movement, whatsoever. His adherence to the *shariat* as well as his self control were so steadfast that he never fell into a state of *wajd* (ecstasy) or *raqs* (dance). The companions of Miyan Mir also followed a similar course. Dara Shikoh has clarified that *sama* and *wajd* were two different things, the former could be defined as listening to *naghma* and the latter as dancing with raised hands.<sup>43</sup> It appears that so far as its attitude towards this controversial issue was concerned, the Qadiriyya, *silsila* had taken up a position midway between those adopted by the Chishtiyya (who considered *sama*, *wajd* and *raqs* as permissible) and the Naqshbandiyya (who did not allow any of these).<sup>44</sup>

Miyan Mir took few disciples,<sup>45</sup> for it was rare to find one who was truly inclined towards God. But, when he did enrol one under his tutelage, he saw to it that he was guided to his destination.<sup>46</sup> The Miyan's attitude in this respect stood in sharp contrast to the numerous *Shaikhs* of the day, who enrolled a large number of disciples only to acquire cheap popularity, but who in fact, led them to the path of infidelity. Since Miyan Mir prescribed a tough course for the *talib* (novice), it was found that everyone did not possess the aptitude necessary for the purpose. Therefore, whenever a person expressed his desire to enrol himself as a disciple, the Miyan turned his face away, did not allow him to sit and asked him to leave forthwith, saying that the path of mysticism was full of hazards. On such occasions, he recited the following couplet :

*Shart awwal dar tareeq maarifat dani keh cheest*  
*Tark kardan har do alam ra wa pusht pa zadan*

The above couplet may be translated as :

What is the first requirement in the path of  
mysticism, do you know  
To renounce both the worlds and to kick  
them with the back of the foot.

43. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 69-72.

44. Surinder Singh, "Muslim Saints in the Mughal Province of Punjab," *Panjab University Research Bulletin*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, April 1986, p. 158.

45. An account of Miyan Mir's disciples has been omitted here in order to maintain the focus on Miyan Mir only.

46. Haji Muhammad Banyani, a disciple of Miyan Mir, has affirmed that the latter took great pains to instruct his disciples ; *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 212.

Thus, to begin with, a *talib* was required to demonstrate his strong inclination to adopt the path of *tark-o-tajrid* (renunciation and solitude) by severing all attachments to wordly affairs. Miyan Mir laid a great emphasis on *tajrid*, for by achieving this state, a *talib* succeeded in his aim in a short time. He was reported to have stated, "It is evident that a person who has taken his bath cannot be called clean if a single hair of his head remains unclean, while all parts of his body have been washed properly ; similarly a person who has severed all wordly connections cannot claim to be *mujarrad* (solitary) if he is troubled by even a single *khatra* (wordly thought)." In the next stage of his training, the *talib* was directed to undertake *riyazat-i-shaqa* (strict discipline), which involved a 'cut' in the amount of his food, sleep and speech.<sup>47</sup> It may be pointed out that Miyan Mir advised his disciples to take packed food along with them, while going out in the jungle for meditation (a practice said to have been followed by Prophet Mohammad) for he believed that the biggest threat to the *talib* was posed by hunger.<sup>48</sup>

In the early stages of their mutual relationship, the Miyan projected himself as the *maashuq* (beloved) and expected the *talib* (novice) to assume the role of the *ashiq* (love). After a period of time, when the *talib* was found steadfast in his *ishq* (love), the roles were reversed—the Miyan became the lover and regarded the *talib* as his beloved. This practice was followed merely to test the sincerity and determination of the novice and to distinguish him from the *ahl-i-hawas* (self-indulgent and ambitious), whose devotion faded away in a short time. Often, Miyan Mir recited the following couplet :<sup>49</sup>

*Kas-e ra imtihan na karda sad bar*  
*Nagirdani tu u ra sahib-i-asrar*

This couplet may be translated as :

A person who has not been tested a hundred times  
Do not consider him to be a knower of secrets.

According to Dara Shikoh, a *talib* should not be discouraged by the

47. Mullah Shah Badakhshi, a leading disciple of Miyan Mir and the *Pir* of Dara Shikoh, found the Miyan's method of training to be too hazardous ; consequently, he simplified it by dropping *riyazat-i-shaqa*, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 167.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-39.

49. Mullah Shash Badakhshi continually appeared in the presence of Miyan Mir for an unbelievably long period of three years, before he was allowed to meditate under the guidance of the Miyan ; *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 39.

outward attitude of their *pir* (spiritual preceptor), because inwardly it was characterized by *hikmat* (wisdom). His role may be compared to the parents, who had the welfare of their son upper-most in their minds when they chastized him; to a *murid* (disciple) the *pir* was a greater benefactor than his own parents. That the *pir* possessed an exalted position in the eyes of Miyan Mir becomes apparent from the following anecdote. Said Mulla Syed Khan, 'I read in the *Nafhat-ul-uns* that a *khalifa* of Shaikh Junaid Baghdadi, who rose to become his successor, declared that he picked the *fuzla* (excrement) of his *pir* for as long as thirty years. That he performed such a task and continued to mention the fact every day even after occupying the Shaikh's seat, was nothing—but the height of the humility and the suppression of one's own physical self. I quoted this instance in the presence of Miyan Mir, who replied, 'There is nothing spectacular about the task undertaken by him; in fact, it was a very easy job which could have been done by any one. On the other hand, it was the Syed-*ui-Taifa* (Shaikh Junaid) who, by clearing his disciple's inner self of everything except God, performed a much greater task.'<sup>50</sup> It may be pointed out that Miyan Mir's high opinion about the role of *pir* vis-a-vis the spiritual training of the novice, did not prevent him from treating his disciples as friends. The word *murid* (disciple) never escaped from his lips, for in his own words, 'The institution of *piri-o-muridi* did not exist in the days of the Prophet; it was substituted by *suhbat* (conversation, discourse or companionship).<sup>51</sup> Whoever sits in my *suhbat* is one of my friends.'<sup>52</sup>

A number miracles were said to have been exhibited by Miyan Mir in an entirely involuntary manner. But he tried to conceal them most scrupulously, for he strongly disapproved of the act of performing miracles. In fact, he did not even relish to converse on the matter, and if anyone tried to involve him in such a dialogue, he recited the following *bait* :

*Har keh u az kashf khud goyed sukhan  
Kashf u ra kafsh kun bar sar bazan*

The foregoing lines may be translated as :

If anyone talks about his revelations (miracles)  
knock his revelation on the head with your shoe.

Miyan Mir reprimanded a dearly-loved companion, Miyan Natha,

50. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 36-40; *Safinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 102.

51. F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, New Delhi, Rep., 1977, p. 782.

52. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 73-74.

who sought to stop rain, wind and thunder of clouds through his miraculous powers. The Miyan declared emphatically that such an attempt was nothing but *khud-faroshi* (self promotion) and amounted to undue interference in matters which fell in the divine jurisdiction.<sup>53</sup> In his opinion, miracles were of two kinds—*akhtiari* and *iztrari*. The former were exhibited by those *ahl-i-dawat* who, in order to fulfil a desire, repeated one of the numerous names of God and by doing so, succeeded in their aim. The latter were those which could not be performed by any voluntary effort, but were entirely willed by God.<sup>54</sup>

Dara Shikoh has recorded (on the basis of information provided by Miyan Mir's disciples and companions) more than forty miracles said to have been performed by the saint. Two of them may be considered here by way of illustration. According to the first one, Haji Ali Kusawi, a merchant by profession, was strongly attached to Miyan Mir on account of his inclination towards mysticism. Once in every five year, he left Lahore for his native place. During one of his journeys, his caravan encamped on the bank of a river, somewhere between Isfahan and Yazd. The Haji saw a man dressed in finery, walking towards the camp. When he found that the stranger was none other than Miyan Mir, he ran forward and placed his head at the feet of his *pir*, who said, 'Your camp is situated on the low-lying ground. Make haste to shift your goods and tents to some elevated place, for a big storm is feared.' Before the Haji could say anything, the Miyan disappeared. In response to the warning, the merchant transferred his belongings to a higher place and asked the other fellow-travellers to do likewise. Although it was a very sunny day, the area was lashed by a terrible storm. Those who heeded to the Haji's bidding were saved, while those who failed to do so perished along with their goods. Later on, it was found that Miyan Mir was in Lahore at that moment.<sup>55</sup>

Another miracle has been related by Mulla Ishaq. Mulla Sangin Sufi, a native of Rustaq, was a disciple of Miyan Mir. He had been staying with his master for a long time, when he was directed by the latter to visit his relatives. But Mulla Sangin did not agree, since he had given up all relationship with worldly matters. However, the strong insistence of the Miyan forced him to comply with the wishes of his preceptor. Travelling through Badakhshan, Mulla Sangin

53. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 140.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

55. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 107-108.

reached Rustaq when it was dark. As he approached his house, he saw that a large number of people had gathered and that candle-lights were burning ; it appeared as if a feat was being held. A man said to him, 'This house belongs to Mulla Sangin, who went to Hindustan eight or nine years ago. The news of his death has been received and the appropriate ceremonies are being held. Also, the widow of the deceased is going to marry another man.' On hearing this, the Mulla became convinced of the miraculous powers of his *pir*. His arrival was celebrated with great joy by his relatives, while the marriage party went away. The Mulla stayed with his family for some time, made arrangements for its livelihood and returned to Lahore. Miyan Mir smiled and said, 'Oh, Sufi, it would have been a great *qabahat* (shame) if you had reached there a bit late.' The Mulla responded by placing his head at the feet of his master.<sup>56</sup>

#### IV

The physical appearance of Miyan Mir was such that it did not fail to leave a deep impression on the beholder. He was a man of medium height. Though his complexion was wheatish, it was quite agreeable. A broad forehead clearly showed the signs of felicity ; the two eye-brows met each other ; the truth-discerning eyes were neither too big nor too small ; the different parts of his body stood in complete proportion to one another. His beard was the size of a closed fist, while his hair had started greying with the coming of age. His body became lean and spare on account excess of *riyazat-o-mujahida* (discipline and self-mortification). Towards the closing years of his life, when he was nearly a hundred, old age and the disease of the feet, forced him to offer his prayers in the sitting posture. At this stage, his eye-sight also became quite weak.<sup>57</sup> The physical appearance of Miyan Mir was evenly matched by his *khulq* (disposition) which was loveable and affectionate. He treated each one of his visitors with such care and consideration that they felt that none had been treated in that manner. While conversing with them, he often held their hands in his own and addressed them as *yaar aziz* (dear comrade). He asked them to take interest in the prosperity of the country and the welfare of the people. He also advised them to be charitable towards the poor and the needy. Just as Abu Jaafar Huddad has stated that if wisdom were located in the face of man,

56. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 124-25.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 55-56.

it should have been found in that of Shaikh Junaid ; similarly Dara Shikoh has asserted that if *khulq* were present in the face of man, it should have been discovered in the face of Miyan Mir.<sup>58</sup>

Miyan Mir did not dress like the religious medicants of the day. Instead of the *khirqa-i-muraqqa* (patched coat), he wore a *jama* (shirt) of coarse cotton and wrapped a low-priced white *dastar* (turban) on his head. He washed this set of clothing with his own hands on the river-bank, as and when the need arose. The dress of his disciples and companions also consisted of *jama* and *dastar*. He often advised them to maintain the cleanliness of their clothes. Whenever he took any disciple under his tutelage, he did not require him to wear a patched coat, because the essential feature of their mutual relationship was *bai at* (swearing allegiance to one's preceptor). In his opinion, one's garments should be such that they did not disclose one's identity as a *faqir*. For, there was no dearth of people who dressed themselves in patched coats, only with the purpose of *khud numai* (self-promotion), while their interior did not conform to their exterior. Once, Haji Muhammad Banyani, a senior disciple of Miyan Mir, wore a patched coat which was torn into pieces, because in the state of *tajrid* (solitude) everything appeared quite agreeable to him. When he passed through the market in this condition, a large crowd gathered around him. A number of people fell at his feet, while many others kissed his hands. Miyan Mir, who happened to see this spectacle, expressed himself strongly against the Haji's style of dressing himself. He remarked 'You should clothe yourself in a manner that no one is able to guess that you belong to our fraternity.' Thereafter, the Haji began to pay great attention to the garments worn by him.<sup>59</sup>

It appears that Miyan Mir ate very little. It was said that he could fast for as long as one or two weeks, without letting his condition be known to anyone. According to Mulla Shah Badakhshi, the souls of this fraternity (*sufis*) received nourishment from *alam-i-ghaib* (the invisible world) and their food consisted of *yaad-i-haq* (the name of God). Miyan Mir claimed that nothing was cooked in his house for a period of thirty years — a contention in support of which he related the following incident. 'Once my brother came all the way from our native place after a very long time. I was worried on account

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58. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 60-61.



of the fact that none of my disciples or companions was present, who could be sent to bring something for my brother to eat. Nor had I anything which I could offer to him, by way of my duty as the host. I left him in the *hujra* (cell) and went out in search of food. I went to a garden, offered my prayer and told the Almighty that He was my sole benefactor and that I had left my guest of His mercy. Soon I heard a heavenly voice assuring me that my desire had been fulfilled even before I had offered my prayer. Just then my brother appeared and informed me that an unknown person, who had brought the food, was waiting for me. When I reached my quarter, I saw a good-looking youngman, who greeted me with salutation. He said that the Almighty had sent the food and cash for me and that if I needed anything else, my demand would be accepted. When I inquired about his identity, he remarked that he was one of the slaves of the Almighty. Thereafter, I and my brother ate the food, but the visitor excused himself saying that he was a *saim* (one who continually abstained from food). When we had finished, he removed the empty dishes, saluted and went away. I kept on thinking for a long time, before I learnt that the stranger was none but a *firishta* (angel).<sup>60</sup> In the early stages, Miyan Mir lived in the manner explained above. However, later on he employed a *khadim* (servant) to prepare his meals which were always of the same kind. The Miyan ate in the company of his disciples; if any one of them was not present, his share was kept aside. In particular, Shaikh Muhammad Lahori received special attention in this regard, for he was the maintainer of a large household.<sup>60</sup>

Miyan Mir had reduced his physical needs to a minimum. It has been claimed on his behalf that, for a number of years, he slept neither during the day nor at night. For, according to Shaikh Qutb, the Miyan did not feel like sleeping at all. Miyan Muhammad Murad would have us believe that, for many a year, Miyan Mir spent the whole night in just one breath, while he did so in four breaths when he had crossed the age of eighty and had become weak due to old age.<sup>61</sup>

A number of people presented themselves before Miyan Mir in order to make offerings. But, as a matter of principle, he did not accept anything brought by the members of the ruling elite or the nobility. If anyone of them sought to make an offering of cash, he

60. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 41-42.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

said, 'Do you consider me to be a *faqir*, I am neither a *faqir* nor the one in need. Instead, I am a *ghani* (a rich man). One who possesses God, cannot be a *faqir*. Take it away and give to it to someone who is needy.' However, he made an exception in the case of *ahl-i-hirfat* (traders, artisans and craftsmen) from whom he accepted offerings in small quantities. He spent a part of it himself and gave away the rest of it to the needy. But if a devoted follower made an offering from his *wajh-i-halal* (legitimate income), the Miyan did not refuse it. He also accepted cooked food from wherever it was received.<sup>62</sup>

Miyan Mir's life was marked by simplicity and freedom from want. The floor of his house, or rather cell, was made of *buriya* (a mat made of split reeds). The *faqr* (asceticism) practised by him belonged to a degree, more than which could not be imagined. He nurtured no desire for worldly possessions. In his eyes, the *fuqra* (mendicants) occupied a higher (spiritual) status than the rich people. He raised strong objection to the mystics who possessed material wealth. He said, 'I am surprised, what kind of *faqir* is this Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya Multani.<sup>63</sup> Let him appear again in this world and learn *faqiri* from me. Then he would understand the true implications of *darveshi* and *faqiri*.<sup>64</sup>

V

Although Miyan Mir's way of life left little scope for any social contact, his fame as a mystic par excellence did not fail to reach the highest scale of the ruling elite. Emperor Jahangir, who had no faith in saints and dervishes, and who often ill-treated them,<sup>65</sup> held Miyan Mir in high esteem. In the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, he observes, 'As it was reported to me that in Lahore one Miyan Shaikh Muhammad Mir by name, who was a dervish, a Sindi by origin, very eloquent, virtuous, austere, of auspicious temperament, a lord of ecstasy, had seated himself in the corner of reliance upon God and retirement, and

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44; *Safinatul-Auliya*, p. 102; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 364.

63. Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya (A.D. 1182-1262) associated freely with the ruling elite, took active part in politics, amassed wealth and accepted financial aid from the state. His *khanqah* at Multan possessed huge granaries of cereals while his treasuries were replete with gold and silver; K.A. Nizami. *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, New Delhi, Rep. 1978, pp. 226-29.

64. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 62.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 46; for Jahangir's punishment to Guru Arjun Dev and Shaikh Nizam Thanesar, see, Mohsin Fani, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, Kanpur, 1904, p. 234.

was rich in his poverty and independent of the world, my truth-seeking mind was not at rest without meeting him, and my desire to see him increased. As it was impossible to go to Lahore, I wrote a note to him, and explained to him the desire of my heart, and that saint, notwithstanding his great age and weakness, took the trouble to come.<sup>66</sup> I sat with him for a long time alone, and enjoyed a thorough interview with him. Truly he is noble personage, and in this age he is a great gain and a delightful existence. This suppliant for grace was taken out of himself by companionship with him, and heard from him sublime words of truth and religious knowledge. Although I desired to make him some gift, I found that his spirit was too high for this, and so did not express my wish. I left him the skin of a white antelope to pray upon, and he immediately bade me farewell and went back to Lahore.<sup>67</sup>

Dara Shikoh, who has provided some more information about the meeting between Jahangir and Miyan Mir, observes that contrary to his belief and practice, the monarch treated the mystic with utmost respect. The two remained together for some time and conversed on a variety of issues. Miyan Mir's words of advice had a spontaneous impact on the receptive mind of the emperor who felt compelled to declare, 'All my possessions---kingdom, treasure, retainers, pomp and splendour—are *sang-o-khas* (stone and rubbish) in my eyes. If you turn your kind attention towards me, I would sever all connections with this world.' Miyan Mir, answered '*Sufi kamil* (a perfect mystic) is one who does not distinguish between *sang* (stone) and *jawahir* (jewel). Since, as you say, you possess such an attitude, you are already a mystic.' Still, the emperor could not be put off. The Miyan argued, 'Your existence is necessary for *pasbani-i-khalqallah* (the care of mankind). Your justice will enable the *faqirs* to engage themselves in their pursuits with *jamiat-i-khatir* (peace of mind).' However, he added that if the emperor could provide his substitute in order to look after the welfare of the people, he would intimate him into the spiritual path. The argument satisfied the emperor, who asked the Miyan to express

66. Though it is not possible to ascertain the exact venue of the meeting, yet it may be surmised that the place was not very far from the city of Lahore, as the emperor was travelling at that time (A.D. 1620) from Sirhind to Kashmir; S.A.A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1983, p. 105.

67. Nuruddin Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Eng. Tr., Alexander Rogers and Henry Beveridge, New Delhi, Rep. 1968, Vol. II, p. 219.

any desire, which he would fulfil. Miyan Mir, thereupon said, 'Allow me to go.' Jahangir allowed the visitor to depart, with numerous expressions of reverence.

Since the emperor had derived immense benefit from his meeting with the Miyan, he hoped for another similar opportunity. He also wrote two letters to the Miyan, one before the above mentioned encounter and the other after that. In the first, he expressed an ardent desire to meet the saint. The second letter, which was written when the ruler of Iran attacked Qandhar, the emperor requested Miyan Mir to remember him, sometime, during his prayers; he hoped that the Miyan would protect men of God from the highhandedness of the oppressors, and desired that the promise-breakers would suffer divine retribution.<sup>68</sup>

Shahjahan (A.D. 1628-1656), the successor of Jahangir, paid two visits to the establishment of Miyan Mir. Dara Shikoh, the biographer of the saint was present at both. On the first occasion, when the emperor entered the *hujra*, he was accompanied by four persons. A pleasant and useful conversation took place, in which Miyan Mir offered advice on a number of matters, including the administration of the realm. He said, 'It is imperative for a just ruler to attend the welfare of the *raiyat* (peasants) and *mamlukat* (empire); he should remain constantly engaged in working for the prosperity of his kingdom. For, if the *raiyat* is contented and the country is in a flourishing state, the soliders remain peaceful and the treasury abundant.' This counsel was followed by a discussion on *din-o-millat* (Islam and the Muslim community). On his second visit to Miyan Mir's quarters, the emperor was accompanied by those who went with him earlier. On this occasion, too, an illuminating dialogue took place. The emperor requested the Miyan to turn his (Shahjahan's) mind away from the world. The saint replied, 'Whenever you do some good deed which brings happiness to the heart of Muslims, pray to God at that moment for yourself and do not demand anything from God except He Himself.' In order to elucidate his point, he recited the following couplet:<sup>69</sup>

*Hum khuda khwahi O hum duniya-i-doon*  
*Een khyal ast muhal ast wa junoon.*

You crave for God as well as this despicable world. This is a mere idea, an impossible proposition, rather insanity.

68. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 46-48.

69. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.

During the course of the meeting, which took place on 28 December 1634, Miyan Mir delivered a learned discourse on spiritual and mundane matters, while the emperor and his companions derived much benefit from it. At the end of the meeting, the emperor presented a gift consisting of a white turban and a rosary made of *khurma* (dates).<sup>70</sup> The Miyan returned the turban but accepted the roasary which, however, was given away to Dara Shikoh. It may be pointed out that Shahjahan found only two mystics in the whole empire who were worthy of reverence—Shah Fazlullah of Burhanpur and Miyan Mir.<sup>71</sup>

Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shahjahan, was a mystic in his own right. He possessed unbounded veneration for Miyan Mir, who was the spiritual preceptor of the former's *pir*, Mulla Shah Badakhshi. On his part, the Miyan showered immense love and affection on the prince. The intimate relationship between the two was illustrated in more than one ways. Once, Dara fell ill. The physicians failed to cure his malady, which continued for as long as four months. It was probably, during his first visit to Miyan Mir's establishment that Shahjahan requested the saint to pray for the well-being of the ailing prince. Miyan Mir took Dara's hand in his own, recited a prayer over an earthen cup of water and asked the prince to drink it. After a gap of one week, Dara began to recover from his disease. He sent an emissary to the Miyan, with a request to pray for the complete restoration of his health. In response, the Miyan declared that the prince would be fully cured on a particular day and moment. The prophecy turned out to be true.

By the time, the second meeting took place between Shahjahan and Miyan Mir, Dara Shikoh had become closely attached to the saint. When the emperor and his companions were coming towards the Miyan's hospice, Dara Shikoh (out of devotion and humility) took off his shoes and walked bare-footed to the destination. While talking to his audience, the Miyan chewed cloves and spat them out—an act which was not relished by those who were sitting there. But, Dara Shikoh collected and ate them, with devotion in his heart. From then onwards, he began to experience a revulsion to wordly affairs, while drawing closer to the Miyan and his disposition reached a stage of equilibrium. When the empeor and his companions left the *hujra*,

70. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, p. 51; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. II, pp. 72-73.

71. *Badshah Nama*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 331; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 366.

Dara Shikoh went up to Miyan Mir all alone, placed his head at the saint's feet and rubbed it for a long time. The Miyan reciprocated the gesture by caressing the prince's head with a cheerful countenance. Moreover, he was pleased to learn from his comrades that the prince had come bare-footed to his quarters.

Miyan Mir carried a high opinion about Dara Shikoh's spiritual interests. Once he told his disciples—Mulla Saleh, Shaikh Ahmed and Miyan Haji Muhammad Banyani—that he always prayed for the spiritual progress of the Prince and that they should also follow the suit. On another occasion, Miyan Khwaja Bihari found Mir reciting something while holding a rosary in his hand—an act which he had never performed earlier. On being questioned, the Miyan explained that he was doing so for the sake of Dara Shikoh who was sick. Similarly, replying to a query posed by Miyan Haji Muhammad Banyani, he declared that Dara Shikoh was his life and his eyes (*U khud jan-i-ma wa chasma-i-ma ast*). It becomes evident from the testimony of Miyan Shaikh Abdul Wahid that Miyan Mir sometimes directed his companions to contemplate while holding Dara Shikoh's face in their imagination. It was on account of this reason that all companions of Miyan Mir bore great affection for the prince. On the other hand, Dara Shikoh has related, at length, his esoteric experiences wherein he received spiritual instructions from Miyan Mir. For instance, he felt that the night of 20 December 1641 was *Lailat-ul-Qadr*,<sup>72</sup> when he was elevated to the status of *Sultan-ul-azkar*,<sup>73</sup> due to the appearance of Miyan Mir in a vision.<sup>74</sup>

## VI

The life span of Miyan Mir (A.D. 1550-1635) coincided with that of the Sikh *gurus* who were engaged, not far from Lahore, in giving form and content to a new socio-religious movement which

72. Literally, it meant 'the night of power.' It has been characterized as the mysterious night in the month of Ramzan, the precise date of which is said to have been known only to the Prophet and a few of the companions. It has been alluded to in the *Surat-ul-Qadr* (XCVII) of the Holy Quran...the excellences of the *Lailat-ul-Qadr* are said to be innumerable, and it is believed that during its solemn hours the whole animal and vegetable creation bow down in humble adoration to the Almighty; T.P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, New Delhi, Rep., pp. 282-83.

73. A process of mystic transformation, leading to *fana*, the last station of the mystical journey when the human soul was annihilated into the Divine Soul; Rizvi, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

74. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 52-55.

sought to establish the oneness of God and the universal brotherhood of man instead of a plethora of mythical deities and a caste-based society. The traditional accounts of the Sikhs present an extremely favourable image of Miyan Mir. They record, with enthusiasm, the mutually cordial relations which existed between the Miyan and the Sikh *gurus*, including the frequent attempts made by the former to protect the latter from the highhandedness of the Mughal administration. To begin with, it has been stated that Miyan Mir laid the foundation of Harimandir, the most sacred place of the Sikhs, constructed at Amritsar.<sup>75</sup> At the invitation of Guru Arjun Dev (the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, whose pontificate extended from A.D. 1581 to 1606) the Miyan came to Amritsar, wearing a religious mendicant's long cloak made of patches of coarse-wool and a cone-cap made of a number of gores with a rose flower on its top. Impressed with the *guru's* objective behind the construction of the unique temple, Miyan Mir laid the first brick of its foundation, amidst the chanting of hymns. A mason, who was present on the scene, found fault with the position of the brick and shifted it to its proper place. Displeased at the mason's audacity, the Miyan remarked that the temple would have to be built again in the course of time. The prophecy turned out to be true about a century and a half later when Ahmed Shah Abdali, the Afghan invader, blew it off with gunpowder.<sup>76</sup>

The alleged involvement of Guru Arjun Dev in the revolt of Prince Khusro coupled with Jahangir's own desire to put an end to the Guru's religious mission, brought the emperor's wrath on the guru, who was summoned to Lahore. Jahangir ordered him to

75. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1978, p. 56; Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1983, p. 42.

76. H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1984, p. 365. The foundation-laying of the Harimandir is a matter of controversy. A recent author, who has studied the issue in detail, has asserted on the basis of early Sikh tradition and the opinion of such scholars as M.A. Macauliffe, Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, that the foundation was laid by Guru Arjun Dev himself. For, it was only the later Sikh tradition as well as the official records prepared by the British administrators during the second half of the nineteenth century, which attributed the above-mentioned ceremony to Miyan Mir; Madanjit Kaur, *The Golden Temple: Past and Present*, Amritsar, 1983, pp. 11-12.

77. Nuruddin Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Eng. Tr., Alexander Rogers and Henry Beveridge, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1968, pp. 72-73; *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, Kanpur, 1904, p. 234; Ganda Singh, 'The Martyrdom of Guru Arjun,' *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. xii-i, April 1978, pp. 160-177.

be put to death by torture and his property to be confiscated.<sup>77</sup> As the sentence was being carried out, Miyan Mir came to the scene and contributed his sympathetic tears. He found the *guru's* body blistered and suppurated all over. He sought the *guru's* permission to appeal to the emperor for his release. In response, the *guru* asked him to cast his eyes towards heaven. On doing so, it was believed, Miyan Mir saw angels begging the *guru's* permission to destroy the wicked, the proud and the perverse. Having beheld this supernatural vision, the Mian asked the *guru* why did he suffer in that manner even as he possessed such superhuman faculties. Thereupon, the *guru* delivered a philosophical discourse, prevented the Miyan from his resolve and justified the silent acceptance of his afflictions.<sup>78</sup> Though the *guru* died as a result of the torture inflicted on him, one version of the episode would have us believe that the rest of the sentence—the making over his houses and children to Murtaza Khan (the newly appointed governor of the *subah* of Lahore) and the confiscation of his property—was not carried out on account of Miyan Mir's intervention.<sup>79</sup>

Miyan Mir's friendship with the Sikh *gurus* survived the execution of Guru Arjan Dev, the evidence of which was provided not long after this tragic occurrence. Guru Hargobind, the son and successor of the fifth *guru*, was confined in the fort of Gwalior when some of his activities were viewed by Jahangir as a threat to the Mughal authority in the region.<sup>80</sup> It was Miyan Mir's intercession with the ruling elite which, among other factors, led to the release of Guru Hargobind.<sup>81</sup> Later on, the *guru* paid a visit to Miyan Mir, who treated his visitor with every mark of respect. He inquired to what degree of divine knowledge he had attained, if he had succeeded in suppressing his desires and if he felt the bliss of having met God. Miyan Mir replied, 'He to whom thou showest favour hath found everything. Having abandoned all false wordly things, I have found the true God, who is

78. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 1963, pp. 94-95.

79. Trilochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, New Delhi, 1967, p. 37; Khushwant Singh, *op cit.*, p. 63.

80. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, p. 234; Kavi Sohan, *Gurbilas Patshahi VI*, ed. Giani Inder Singh Gill, Amritsar, 1968, pp. 147-154, 173; Bhai Gurdas, *Vaaran*, Amritsar, 1952, *Vaar* 26, *Pauri* 24.

81. Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. I, Patiala, 1970, pp. 425-426; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, Patiala, 1970, pp. 127-128; Indubushan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 3rd ed., 1972, pp. II. 165.



beyond conception and expression. Whoever hath seen Him hath abandoned pride and obtained peace. My mind is at rest and no longer tormented by desires.' After further discussion on a number of similar issues, the *guru* took leave of the Miyan. The whole incident was reported to Jahangir by certain nobles, who expressed their surprise at the manner in which Miyan Mir treated the *guru*, a married man. The emperor sought an explanation from the Miyan, who replied, 'The *guru* is a sincere believer in God. His heart is pure and his words leave an impression on the mind. From those who hear him all doubts depart. On this account I have received him, and thought him worthy of respect and reverence.'<sup>82</sup>

Sikh tradition provides still another instance of the faith and goodwill that existed between Miyan Mir and Guru Hargobind. Rustam Khan, the *qazi* of Lahore, had a daughter named Kaulan, who was an ardent devotee of Miyan Mir. On account of her visits to the Miyan's *khanqah*, she developed a devotional inclination towards the religious tenets of the Sikhs, whose spiritual head, Guru Hargobind, appears to have been a frequent visitor to the hospice. Infuriated at the way of life adopted by his daughter, Rustam Khan attempted to bring her into the fold of orthodox Islam by subjecting to various forms of ill-treatment. Kaulan had no alternative but to report the matter to Miyan Mir, who directed her to take shelter with his friend, Guru Hargobind. Escorted by Abdullah Shah, one of the disciples of the Miyan, she went to Amritsar and began to live under the benevolent care of the *guru*, who provided her with all the protection needed by her. The *qazi*, who already had a grudge against the *guru* over the possession of a beautiful horse, complained to Jahangir that his maiden daughter had been abducted by the *guru*. On this occasion too, the intervention of Miyan Mir (and Wazir Khan) prevented the emperor from proceeding against Guru Hargobind.<sup>83</sup>

## VII

Having spent a period of sixty years at Lahore, Miyan Mir died on 7 *Rabi-ul-awwal* 1045 A.H./21 August 1635 A.D. He had been afflicted with an attack of *ishal* (dysentery) which continued for five days. Some of his disciples, who remained continually present at his bedside, included Mulla Khwaja Bihari, Shaikh Muhammad Lahori, Miyan Haji Muhammad Banyani and Nur Muhammad, the servant.

82. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, New Delhi, 1963, pp. 41-42.

83. Kanahya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, p. 24; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Vol. I, pp. 433-434; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, pp. 134-135.

One day before the Miyan's death, Wazir Khan, the governor of the *subah* of Lahore (*hakim-i-shahr*), paid a visit to the Miyan's *hujra*. He offered to take the Miyan under the medical care of a skilful physician, who had been brought for the purpose. But Miyan Mir refused saying that *hakim-i-mutliq* (the absolute physician or God) was enough for him. Wazir Khan, thereafter, left the cot and laid himself on a bedding on the floor. Though his breathing became uneven, there was a smile on his face; his hands were moving as if in a trance and he was reciting '*Allah Allah*,' not by any deliberate effort but by virtue of a habit which had become a part of his nature. It was in this condition that Miyan Mir breathed his last.

On hearing the news of Miyan Mir's demise, Wazir Khan (*hakim-i-shahr*) accompanied by the leading scholars and the prominent citizens of the metropolis, reached the saint's dwelling. The disciples and servants of the deceased covered the dead body in a shroud and completed other rituals connected with the burial. A large number of Muslims participated in the *salat-i-namaz* (the last prayer). A grand funeral procession, including the *hakim-i-shahr*, the local inhabitants as well as the commoners, joined the funeral procession which brought the Miyan's coffin to the place of burial with all marks of honour and respect. In accordance with his wishes, Miyan Mir was laid to rest where his companions—Miyan Natha, Haji Sulaiman, Shaikh Abul Mukarim, Haji Mustafa Kalal and a few others—had been buried. The place, called Alamganj, was situated at a distance of half a *kos* from Lahore and midway between the eastern and southern parts of the city. It was located near the *mauza* Darapur popularly known as Hashimpur. Needless to say, Miyan Mir's separation drowned his disciples, companions, friends and admirers in a sea of grief; for them 21 August 1635 was verily the *roz-i-qiyyamat* (the last day).<sup>84</sup>

The mausoleum of Miyan Mir is situated in the cantonment area (also known as Miyan Mir) distant three miles east of the modern city of Lahore. The dome over the tomb is supported by quadrangular tower rising from a large platform of marble, reached by a flight of steps of the same material. The court-yard is spacious and paved with red sand-stone. To the west of the dome, in the same court-yard, is a beautiful mosque, and to the south and east are chambers for the

84. *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, pp. 95-99; *Badshah Nama*, vol. I, part ii, p. 331; *Amal-i-Saleh*, Vol. III, p. 366.

accommodation of *faqirs* and travellers. Below the marble stairs are two isolated tombs, one of marble and the other of solid masonry. One is that of Muhammad Sharif (the son of Miyan Mir's sister, Jamal Khatun) who became the first *sajjada-nashin* after the death of the Miyan, and the other is that of Haji Muhammad Saleh. Dara Shikoh, who constructed a spacious mausoleum over the remains of his *pir* (Mulla Shah Badakshi), had commenced building a more superb shrine over the remains of Miyan Mir, when he was put to death at the orders of Aurangzeb. The portion of the Miyan's tomb and the mosque attached to it, covered with marble is the work of Dara Shikoh. The upper portion built of masonry, is the work of Aurangzeb who with the materials collected by Dara for the tomb of Miyan Mir, and the construction of a road from Chowk Dara to Miyan Mir (Cantonment area), built the Badshahi Masjid at Lahore.<sup>85</sup> The *Sakinat-ul-Auliya* contains the following chronogram,<sup>86</sup> composed by Mulla Fathullah Shah, which is inscribed on the gate of the tomb:

*Miyan Mir sar daftar arifan  
Keh khaq darsh rashk aksir shud  
Safar janib shahr javed kard  
Chu z een mehnat abaad dilgeer shud  
Khird bahar saal wafaatsh nawisht  
Bafirdaus wala Miyan Mir shud*

The above passage may be translated as :

Miyan Mir is the chief of gnostics  
The dust of whose portals is envied  
by the alchemist's stone  
Travelled to the city of eternity  
Being disgusted with this world of sorrow  
Wisdom determined for the year of his death  
Miyan Mir has gone to the highest heaven.

The last line gives 1045 A. H./1635 A.D. as the year of his death.

85. S.M. Latif, Lahore : *Ist History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, Lahore, 1892, pp. 174-177.

86. *Sakinat-ul-Aulia*, p. 97.

## The Battle of Chamkaur (22 December 1705)

DEVINDER KUMAR VERMA\*

After his twelfth battle Guru Gobind Singh had to leave his ancestral home at Anandpur on the night of December 20-21, 1705. He planned to move towards the Malwa territory, south of the Satluj. The Guru's imperialist pursuers attacked him all of a sudden on the left bank of the Sirsa rivulet on the morning of December 21, 1705. In the confusion that followed in crossing the flooded stream, the companions of the Guru and the members of his family strayed away in different directions. The Guru, his elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh and some of his Sikhs went towards Chamkaur. The Guru's aged mother and the younger sons, accompanied by a servant, named Gangu, to the latter's village Saheri on the Ropar-Morinda road.

The question arises as to why Chamkaur was chosen by the Guru as his next place of shelter. Perhaps there were two reasons. Firstly, the Guru was having very cordial relations with the *chaudharis* of that place. Secondly, he was fully aware of the geographical situation of the areas as he had already stayed there for some time while on his way back to Kurukshetra.

Guru Gobind Singh came to a garden situated in the southern side of the city of Chamkaur<sup>1</sup> in the evening of December 21, 1705. According to Senapat, a Jat *chaudhari* named Jagat Singh, the owner of the *garhi*, invited the Guru and handed it over to him.<sup>2</sup> Malcolm also writes that the Raja of Chamkaur received the Guru in a kind and friendly manner<sup>3</sup> and not only handed over the fortress but also assisted him in the combat that followed. But according to Bhai Santokh Singh,<sup>4</sup> Bhai Sukha Singh,<sup>5</sup> Rattan Singh Bhangu<sup>6</sup> and

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1. Senapat, *Gursobha* (ed. by Ganda Singh), Pbi. Uni., Patiala, 1967, 4, 473, p. 74; Santokh Singh, *Suraj Parkash*, Vol. XIV, *Rut* 6, *Ansu* 34, p. 5854.

2. *Ibid.*, Ch. XII, 6, p. 74; Cf. Koer Singh, *Gur Bilas Patshahi Das*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p. 195.

3. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, Rep. Chandigarh, 1981, p. 51.

4. Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 5857.

5. Sukha Singh, *Gurbilas*, Chasmenoore Press, Amritsar, Samvat Nanakshahi 420 (1889 A.D.), pp. 370-72.

6. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash* (Amritsar, 1939), p. 41.

Macauliffe,<sup>7</sup> the possession of the *garhi* was taken forcibly by the Guru and its owner was made captive. But this does not seem to be correct. Some of the writers still hold the opinion that the Guru himself had constructed the *garhi* for his future contest. This statement also seems to be incorrect.

The Guru, with his forty men, stayed in the *garhi*. Infact, in Chamkaur, there was neither a fortress nor a headquarter of the ruler and even there was no ruler of that place. Under the circumstances Chamkaur was the best selection of the Guru as the Mughal forces, reinforced with the fresh contingent from Delhi, were pursuing him. The Mughal army commanded by Khawajah Muhammad and Nahar Khan Pathan, who beloned to Malerkotla and posted at the *thana* of Ropar, encompassed Chamkaur on all sides.<sup>8</sup> The Guru fully aware of his limitations decided to face the challenge boldly as there was no other alternative. The Guru was having only a small band of forty faithful Sikhs. They too were not fully equipped (their weapons comprising only sabres, spears, swords and lancers) and only a small *garhi* to protect them against thousands of the Mughal soldiers who were fully equipped. It seems that the Guru also did not receive any help from the local people. Thus, the Guru had a little provisions with him. According to the local tradition Jagat Singh was, later on, punished by the Mughals for providing *garhi* to the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh placed his men on strategic positions and himself along with his two sons and Sant Singh and Daya Singh took up position on the top storey of the *garhi*.<sup>9</sup> He sent his men in batches of five each to contend with the army outside and meet a sure death. None of them turned his back upon the enemy. These courageous men suffering from hunger, fatigue and disaster kept the enemy repulsed and fought with unswerving prowess in their self-defence. Commenting on the tactics of the Guru, Indubhusan Banerjee writes, "the defence that he extemporised at Chamkaur, where, as tradition affirms, the Guru, with only forty chosen companions, kept at bay for several hours a whole host of the opposing troops has hardly a parallel, and the keen and discerning eye with which he chose the spot where the battle of Khidrana was fought and the army of Wazir Khan was compelled to retire, leaves us in no doubt as to

7. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, London, 1909, p. 52.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 5858, 5862-863.

his tactical genius.”<sup>10</sup>

It was indeed a very unequal combat between a handful of the Guru's men and the overwhelming number of the enemy. Writing about the battle subsequently in his letter in Persian addressed to the Emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh said, “what could forty famished men do when such a large number fell on them abruptly.”<sup>11</sup>

The Guru put to death with his arrows a number of persons who tried to get into the *garhi*. Nahar Khan, an officer of the imperial army and a great warrior, also tried to scale the wall of the *garhi*, but was shot dead by the Guru's arrow.<sup>12</sup> Khawaja Mardud, another proud Mughal officer, who earlier pledged to capture the Guru alive and present him before Emperor Aurangzeb, was wounded.<sup>13</sup> The Guru writes that the despicable Khawaja Mardud had not the courage to leave the shelter of the wall and come into the open. Alas ! had I seen his face, I would have unhesitatingly bestowed an arrow on him.<sup>14</sup> Describing this battle, Macauliffe writes, “Zabardast Khan, the Lahore Viceroy, was greatly distressed on seeing many of his men slain, and called on his army at once to destroy the handful of Sikhs who were causing such havoc in the imperial ranks. When the swords of the Sikhs were broken and their arrows spent, they spitted the enemy with their spears.”<sup>15</sup>

The two elder sons—Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh begged their father, one after the other, to be allowed to court death in the only befitting manner open to the Guru's Sikhs. The Guru permitted them cheerfully to go and fight against the heavy odds of the enemy. They displayed marvellous courage and made battle with veteran's determination and skill. They caused much destruction in the ranks

10. Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1962, p. 159.

11. *Zafarnama*, 19

ਗੁਰਸਨ ਚਿ ਕਾਰੇ ਕੁਨਦ ਚਿਹਲ ਨਰ  
ਕਿ ਦੇਹ ਲਕ ਬਰ ਆਇਦ ਬਰੂ ਬੇਖਬਰ ॥

12. *Zafarnama*, 29

ਚੁ ਦੀਦਮ ਕਿ ਨਾਹਰ ਬਿਯਾਮਦ ਬਜੰਗ  
ਚਸੀਦਾ ਜਕੇ ਤੀਰੇ ਮਨ ਬੇਦਰੰਗ ॥

13. Koer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 206; S.M. Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 265; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-2.

14. *Zafarnama*, 34; Gjan Singh, *Sri Guru Panth Parkash* (ed. by Kirpal Singh), Vol. III (Amritsar, 1971), p. 1623.

15. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, London, 1909, pp. 188-89.

of the enemy before they were overcome. They died as heroes before the eyes of their father, delighting his heart with the noblest and daring of the deeds recorded by history.<sup>16</sup> The Sikhs kept the enemy at bay till sunset. The battle was fought on 22 December 1705 at the place where at present a very huge building of Gurdwara Katalgarh enshrines their immortal memory. According to the local traditions, thoroughly verified by the author of this paper from a number of knowledgeable persons, Bibi Sharan Kaur of village Raipur (about 2 miles from Chamkaur) was very much perturbed on hearing the death of two sons of the Guru in the battle-field. Fully knowing about the dead bodies, she made up her mind to accomplish the last rites of the both. She, with a lamp in her hand, reached the battle-field. With great difficulty, she recognised the bodies from their plumes. What little she could do she did. She was caught and slain by the Mughal soldiers.

In a three-hour battle<sup>17</sup> on a single day, two sons of the Guru, three of the five beloved ones and thirty two other followers laid down their lives at the alter of faith and freedom.<sup>18</sup> Thus by the night-fall the Guru was left with only five Sikhs to defend the place. How long could their bravery last while fighting against those heavy odds? They also persuaded the Guru to leave the place in the night.<sup>19</sup> In the hope that if the Guru could manage to escape the holocaust he could organise the Khalsa again to fight the Mughals in future. If he stayed on in the *garhi* for the night he was sure to meet his end next day. This was a sort of another war strategy adopted by the Sikhs vis-i-vis the grave situation. They took a historical decision in the best interest of the *Panth* or Sikh fraternity. The Guru could not refuse the 'order' of the five which was considered higher than the will of the Guru himself. He, a firm believer in democratic principles, submitted

16. Senapat, *op.cit.*, 75/544/p. 84; Santokh Singh, *Suraj Parkash* (ed. Bhai Vir Singh, Amritsar 1973, pp. 5876-5881; Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Panjab*, p. 49; Sukha Singh), *op. cit.*, p. 377; Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 41; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Longman, Bombay, 1950, p. 73; Innayat Ullah Khan Ismi, *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, p. 11; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1937, p. 246; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 43; Koer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

17. Senapat, *op. cit.*, 12/481/p. 75; Koer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

18. Ganda Singh, *Makhze Tarikh-i-Sikhan* (Ms.), i. p. 8.

19. H.R. Gupta, *The History of the Sikhs*, pp. 208-09.

to the collective counsel. At the dead of night when all was quiet outside, the Guru along with his three companions—Bhai Daya Singh, Dharam Singh and Bhai Man Singh<sup>20</sup>—escaped eluding the vigilance of the guards. Only two Sikhs—Sant Singh and Sangat Singh—offered to remain in the *garhi*. The Guru put his *kalghi* on the forehead of Bhai Sant Singh who had a close resemblance with the Guru. He also put on the similar dress and sat in place of the Guru.<sup>21</sup>

The Sikh historians, on the basis of a tradition, write that the Guru left the place clapping his hands thrice to awake the enemy so that they might not announce that he had absconded. As the Guru emerged out of the portals of the fortress, he extinguished with his arrows the night torches of the besieging troops. This created chaos among them and the Guru escaped. But this does not seem to be correct and looks paradoxical to the strategy which was finalised between the Guru and the Sikhs for his escape to a safe place. There was nothing wrong in adopting diplomatic moves. Prior to this the Guru had also left Anandpur in the friendly cover of darkness.

It was decided that on the next morning the remaining two Sikhs would face the brunt of the enemy providing opportunity to the Guru and his three Sikhs to march away from the *garhi* to reach some safe retreat and outwitting the enemy. They decided to head towards the Malwa tract in the north of Chamkaur. Since Anandpur was already captured by the Mughals and in the east at a little distance away was the town of Sirhind—a stronghold of the Mughals and on the west lay the river Satluj—a formidable obstacle, therefore, it was decided to proceed to the north.

In the morning, the battle was resumed and the two Sikhs—Sangat Singh and Sant Singh—holding the *garhi* raised arrows on the enemy's army which encircled them. It was a most unequal contest in the annals of mankind, but the Sikhs fought courageously, with unflinching tenacity and heroism. But the building was soon scaled. Both the Sikhs were killed and the Mughals rejoiced the capture of the *garhi*. But very soon they were sorely disappointed that neither of the killed Sikhs was Guru Gobind Singh.<sup>23</sup>

20. Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, Vol. III, p. 1643; Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 5885.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 1642; Sukha Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 386; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 44; Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *Sikh Martyrs*, Madras, 1923, p. 67; H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

22. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

23. H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 209.



When the Guru reached Jandsar, a local Gujjar identified him and raised a cry but to no effect. Then he reached Behlolpur.<sup>23</sup>

For a few days the Guru remained alone as his companions were separated on account of the darkness. These were the hard days for him. After hazarding unbearable hardships which he faced during his nocturnal journey through the inhospitable jungle in the thorny wilds of Machchiwara he had to move about barefooted and for days he had nothing to eat but tender leaves of *akk* plant. He was found lying with a clod of earth to rest his head on, with torn clothes and blistered feet.<sup>24</sup> Soon after the Guru met his three followers. They told the Guru that the situation was grave on account of the enemies being in hot pursuit of him.<sup>25</sup>

The two Rohilla Pathans Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, who were once in the service of the Guru and later on became horse-merchants, were moved by the plight of the Guru. They vowed that they would save the Guru at the risk of their lives. They dressed the Guru in blue garb of a Muhammadan with hair of his head flowing. They seated him on a litter, which was carried by Nabi Khan, Ghani Khan, Man Singh and Dharam Singh and Bhai Daya Singh reverentially waved a *chauri* from the behind.<sup>26</sup> Near the village of Lall Kalan the party met a contingent of the Mughal troops which had been in search of Guru Gobind Singh. The officer had some doubt and made searching inquiries. Finding the answers not very satisfactory, the officer sent for *qazi* Pir Muhammad of Saloh, once the Persian tutor of the Guru, and asked him to identify the occupant of the litter. The *qazi* gave the helpful reply by certifying him to be a Muslim Pir of Uch.<sup>27</sup> In this way the situation was saved. The families of these Muslim friends, including that of Pir Muhammad received a letter of appreciation (*Hukamnamah*) at a place Haren.<sup>28</sup> It is said that the letter is still with their descendants.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, Vol. III, p. 1644.

26. Koer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 217; Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 1644; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

27. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 46; Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 5906; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 74; H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 210; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 192; I.B.B., *op. cit.*, p. 135; G. C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 95.

28. Koer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

On the way the Guru visited Katana, Kanech, Sahnewal, Nandpur, Tibba and Alamgir. At Heran, one *zamindar* named Nand Lal, brother of Bhai Mani Singh, offered him a beautiful horse which he accepted. The Guru also cast off the robes of *Uch ka Pir*.

Then the Guru reached the place of a Jat named Rai Kalha (Muslim Chieftain) of Jatpura, who was the Guru's devotee, and close relative of Nihang Khan. He was heartily welcomed. At the Guru's instance, Nura Mahi (Kalha's man) was sent to Sirhind to bring the tidings of the Guru's family and his followers. Mahi brought the news that the Guru's children had been done to death.<sup>29</sup> This deeply grieved the Guru. Checking the tears and turning his sorrows into a strong resolve, he muttered, "No, no, my sons are not dead. They refused to barter their religion. They live for ever. It is Sirhind that shall die," saying this, he knocked out a shrub with his arrow and added, "the enemy shall be uprooted like this."<sup>30</sup>

Nura also hinted that there was a rumour at Sirhind that Wazir Khan would soon send a force in the pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh. Thus the Guru directed his Sikhs towards *jungle desh*, the land of Brars, passing through the village of Manuke, Mehdianna, Chakkar, Thakhatpura, Madheh and reached Dina.

In the end we can conclude in the words of I.B. Banerjee that "for sheer valour and endurance the battle that ensued has scarcely any parallel."<sup>31</sup> In the battle the Guru and his Sikhs displayed heroic endurance and undaunted courage and before which even the heroism of Spartan of the Pass of Thermopylae would faint into insignificance. The Sikhs fought with such valour and strength that the enemy thought that they were endowed with supernatural power.<sup>32</sup>

29. I.B. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 136; H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 210; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 45; Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 5922, 5931-34.

30. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

31. I.B. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

32. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

## Adina Beg Khan's Role in the Punjab Politics Vis-i-Vis The Sikhs

HARPREET KAUR\*

Adina Beg Khan did not belong to a renowned family nor was he brought up with a silver spoon in his mouth. He rose from obscurity into the full blaze of historical renown in the eighteenth century Punjab. He was born to very poor parents, at the village of Sharakpur near Lahore. His father, named Channu, was an Arain by caste.<sup>1</sup> He was brought up in a Mughal family and he often spent his time at Jallalabad, Khanpur and Bajwara situated in the Jullundur Doab. On account of an extreme poverty he adopted a soldier's occupation and was employed as a tax-gatherer of the village of Jowall commonly known by the name of Kang in the Lohian area of Jullundur Doab. He was an able man, very good at accounts. He displayed great energy, courage and force of character in the performance of his new duties.<sup>2</sup>

He was strong, stoutly built and a tall man. After some years Adina Beg succeeded by means of a security from Lala Sri Niwas Dheer, a banker of Sultanpur, to contract five or six villages in the territory of Kang. In the next year all the villages of Kang area came under his charge.<sup>3</sup>

Adina Beg regularly deposited his revenues. The district officer was so deeply impressed by his loyalty and ability that he sometimes deputed him to Lahore to deposit the district revenues with provincial treasury. Thus Adina Beg got opportunities to gain influence in the court of Lahore.<sup>4</sup>

When the district officer of Sultanpur died Adina Beg Khan went to Lahore to have an interview with Nawab Zakariya Khan

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1. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, p. 1, MS., Dr Ganda Singh's personal collection, Patiala; (English version, p. 1).

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

who was deeply impressed by his demeanour. On the security provided by Lala Sri Niwas of Sultanpur Adina Beg was appointed to the post of the district officer of Sultanpur in A.D. 1739. Adina Beg repaid his debt of gratitude which he owed to Lala Sri Niwas by appointing him his immediate assistant and his elder brother Bhowani Das, who could read and write Persian, as the Superintendent of his office.<sup>5</sup>

During his invasion of India in 1739 Nadir Shah plundered Sultanpur but Adina Beg's active measures did not allow the invader to do as much harm to the areas under his care as to the other territories.<sup>6</sup> The confusion caused by the Persian invasion provided opportunity to the Sikhs to assert themselves more strongly. The Sikhs relieved the invaders of the burden of their booty on their return march and also got hundreds of captives—men and women—liberated from their hands.

#### Adina Beg as Nazim of the Jullundur Doab

After the retirement of Nadir Shah from India Adina Beg whole-heartedly engaged himself in the reconstruction of his district and as a result, normalcy was restored to it and he began to be appreciated in all quarters.

Zakariya Khan was in search of a suitable man who should restore order in the Jullundur Doab which was the worst victim of Nadir Shah's troops. Zakariya Khan knew that Adina Beg, besides being active and energetic, had the personal knowledge of the Doab. So he was promoted to the high rank of *nazim* of the Jullundur Doab in 1739 and was entrusted, with the task of chastising the Sikhs.

As a *nazim* too Adina Beg acquitted himself very well and he was able to establish peace in the Doab in a short time. He was more of a diplomat than an administrator. In the words of Bakht Mal, "Adina Beg was passionately greedy. He did not crush the Sikhs, although he could do it, if he so intended. He felt that if he quelled the Sikhs some other tax-farmers might be entrusted with the government of the Doab for a higher sum and he might be deprived of his post. This attitude of Adina Beg helped the Sikhs to grow stronger and they gradually occupied many villages as *jagirs*."<sup>7</sup>

The same view is confirmed by James Browne who wrote about

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. Bakht Mal, *Khalsa Nama*, pp. 58-59.

Adina Beg in the late eighties of the eighteenth century. He says : "The force he had with him was fully equal to the execution of that service, but Adina Beg considering that, if he should entirely put an end to all disturbances in that district, there would remain no necessity for continuing him in so extensive a command, carried on intrigues with the chiefs of the Sikhs, and secretly encouraged them to continue their depredations, at the same time pretending to be very desirous of subduing them. From this management the Sikhs became daily more powerful and seized upon several places in distant parts of the Suba of Lahore. They also began to perform public pilgrimages to the Holy Tank at Amritsar without molestation."<sup>8</sup>

Zakariya Khan was very keen to drive the Sikhs out of his province. Adina Beg asked the Sikhs to vacate the territory. The Sikhs deputed Jassa Singh Thoka (Ramgarhia) to settle terms with Adina Beg. He had not begun to be called Ramgarhia as yet. Adina Beg proved too clever for the Sikh *vakil* and succeeded in enlisting the services of the Ramgarhia Sardar. The Sikhs were shocked at the conduct of their envoy and they moved over to the Sirhind division of Delhi Province.

For some time things moved on smoothly but then Adina Beg fell on bad days. Zakariya Khan was hard-pressed by financial difficulties. He imprisoned Diwan Lakhpat Rai and his brother Jaspat Rai for their failure to make payments to his troops. The Diwan's brother Jaspat Rai secured the release of his brother and himself on the promise of disbursing payments to the army. Orders of the Nawab were secured to get the accounts of the revenue officers checked. Adina Beg was also called upon to render accounts of the revenue collected by him. His deposits in the treasury were also short of the collections made by him. Adina Beg unsuccessfully tried to approach Diwan Lakhpat Rai to explain his position. Adina Beg, along with his assistants Bhowani Das Chaudhary and Nidhan Singh, resident of a village near Batala, was ordered to be imprisoned for one year.<sup>9</sup>

After the lapse of the period of his confinement Bhowani Das, on the security of Lala Sri Niwas got Adina Beg released, and took

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8. James Browne, *India Tracts*, II, p. 14 ; Cf. *The Jullundur District Gazetteer*, 1904, p. 29.

9. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, pp. 4-5.

upon himself the responsibility of clearing the arrears. While in prison Adina Beg suffered much trouble and to save being involved again in such difficulties he left the city at night and fled towards the hills of Jowall. Bhowani Das, who was instrumental in the deliverance of Adina Beg, incurred the displeasure of Diwan Lakhpat Rai. The Diwan ordered Bhowani Das to be put into a large pan to be boiled alive. Although the agony of his torture was extreme but he refused to make any confession about his master. Adina Beg's income and surplus balance, only repeating, "You may do whatever you like to do with me. Without the presence of my master I will tell nothing."<sup>10</sup>

The Diwan ordered that Bhowani Das be taken out of the pot and the necessary treatment of his burnt body be done. The Diwan asked Bhowani Das for any favours. In reply Bhowani Das entreated that his master, Adina Beg, be reinstated. In the course of an year he would clear up all the demands of the state. Adina Beg was called to the court and the Nawab bestowed upon him a robe of honour, and ordered him to return to his previous station. Though Adina Beg was happy over his re-appointment but he always nursed in his heart fears from the Nawab.<sup>11</sup>

After the death of Zakariya Khan in July 1745 Adina Beg Khan found himself placed politically under Yahiya Khan who had no control over Shah Nawaz Khan. In order to maintain his sway over the Jullundur Doab which was the most fertile part of the Punjab, Yahiya Khan treated Adina Beg Khan with great consideration. Adina Beg played his part so cautiously and consummately that he won the trust of Yahiya Khan, retaining at the same time the confidence of Shah Nawaz Khan, though the brothers were hostile to each other. Adina Beg gave proof of his loyalty by persecuting the Sikhs from April to June 1746.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately when Adina Beg saw the scales turning against Yahiya Khan, he openly sided with Shah Nawaz Khan. He led an attack against Yahiya Khan at Lahore in March 1747, winning him a victory. Yahiya Khan was captured and Shah Nawaz became the governor of Lahore. Now Shah Nawaz Khan entrusted a complete charge of Jullundur Doab to Adina Beg.<sup>13</sup>

10. *Ibid*, p. 5.

11. *Ibid*, pp. 5-6.

12. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panthi Prakash*, pp. 389-90 (ed. 1914).

13. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, I, pp. 113-14; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, p. 50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, I, p. 200.

The Wazir of Delhi was utterly disappointed at these developments at Lahore. Yahiya Khan managed to escape to Delhi. Shah Nawaz felt extremely perturbed and felt sure that the retribution of the Emperor and his Wazir must fall upon him. At this juncture, Adina Beg advised Shah Nawaz Khan to communicate with Ahmad Shah Abdali. In the words of Sayid Ghulam Hussain, "the adviser of the young viceroy at this time was Adina Beg Khan, who was a devil under the appearance of man. He was resolved to upset his master's power and to raise his own on its ruins." He addressed him in these words: "You are no more than a nephew to Wazir Qamar-ud-Din Khan, but your elder brother, Yahiya Khan, is his son-in-law besides. He has gone to make complaint against you in the court. Rest assured that neither the Emperor nor the Wazir would leave you undisturbed in the full enjoyment of two governments. You have only one recourse of joining Ahmad Shah Abdali's party. He is a powerful and successful man and openly aspires to the crown. He will look upon your joining him as the most unexpected favour which heaven could confer upon him."<sup>14</sup> Accordingly he sent his envoy to Ahmad Shah with the message, 'Crown to Ahmad Shah and Wazirship to Shah Nawaz.' Adina Beg on the other hand, showed no compunction in stabbing his master in the back. He informed the Wazir of the secret correspondence between Shah Nawaz Khan and Ahmad Shah saying that, "his nephew had become very headstrong, had entered into correspondence with Ahmad Shah and paid no attention to the words of his best servants."<sup>15</sup>

The Wazir was very much perturbed at this news and he at once wrote in his own hand to Shah Nawaz Khan a personal, conciliatory and affectionate letter purporting "that their family had never been guilty of an act of ingratitude or treason; it was a sorrowful thing that he should have had such intentions and a matter of shame for him to have stooped to obey an Afghan personal attendant of Nadir Shah. He should rather drive out this insignificant fellow from all the frontiers of Hindustan; the five provinces of Kabul, Kashmir, Thatta, Lahore and Multan would then come under his jurisdiction; and in this, the whole empire with all its resources will be

14. Ghulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, III, p. 16.

15. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, MS., G.S., p. 61; Tahmas Khan, p. 8; Ghulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, III, p. 17; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 201; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, I, p. 160 (ed. 1970).

at his back." This letter reversed the situation as it touched Shah Nawaz Khan's pride. He at once changed his mind, and, unmindful of the negotiations with Ahmad Shah, decided to throw in his lot with his traditional masters in opposition to the Durrani.<sup>16</sup>

On the 11th January 1748, a fierce contest took place between the forces of Abdali and Shah Nawaz Khan. Shah Nawaz was defeated and he fled to Delhi. Adina Beg Khan accompanied him. The Mughal Emperor despatched a huge army of two lakhs under Wazir Qamar-ud-Din Khan to check the advance of Abdali, Qamar-ud-Din was killed and his son Mir Mannu defeated Ahmad Shah Abdali's army which fled back to Afghanistan. Adina Beg Khan who was in close attendance on Mir Mannu received two bullet-wounds in the battle. After assuming the governorship of Lahore Mir Mannu confined Adina Beg Khan in the *faujdari* of the Jullundur Doab.

Mir Mannu gave strict instructions to Adina Beg to curb the power of the Sikhs who had become supreme in the northern hilly portions of the Doab. Adina had to be active against the Sikhs, although in his heart of hearts he never wished a complete break off with the them whom he planned to use for the fulfilment of his own designs. In the words of Browne, "He began, as formerly, to intrigue with the Sicks (Sikhs) and took no effectual means to suppress them."<sup>17</sup> Even then willy nilly he had to lead an expedition against them and in the engagements which followed, both the parties lost heavily, the Sikhs alone having 600 dead in the battle-field. In view of the superior number of the Sikh forces, Adina Beg had to give up the struggle against them. Due to the ensuing rainy season further operations had to be suspended.

The Sikhs put their five hundred men in the fort of Ram Rauni. Mir Mannu ordered Adina Beg Khan to march against them. Adina Beg blockaded Ram Rauni. The Sikhs, occasionally, sallied out and created a havoc in Adina's ranks. The Sikh garrison continued dwindling and under these critical circumstances they sent a word to Jassa Singh Thoka who was in the employ of Adina Beg to help them and if he did not render any help he would be ostracized and never readmitted into the fold of the Sikh Church. Jassa Singh, in

16. Ghulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakhhirin*, II, p. 17; *Tazkira-i-Anandram*, p. 235; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 202; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

17. Browne, *India Tracts*, II, p. 16.



consideration of his co-religionists, deserted Adina Beg and entered the fort at night.<sup>18</sup> Through Kaura Mal, Jassa Singh got the siege lifted, to the chagrin of Adina Beg who could not tolerate Kaura Mal at the Lahore court. Kaura Mal was a formidable personality and superior to Adina Beg in diplomacy and political tact. Adina Beg dissented saying, "Goodness to evil-doers is doing evil to good people." These remarks cut no ice with Mir Mannu, and he endorsed the advice of Kaura Mal.

When Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the third time in December 1751 and besieged Lahore Mir Mannu called a meeting of the war council. Kaura Mal told Mir Mannu that the Lahore Government's troops were mostly raw and were no match for the hardy Afghan warriors of the north-west. Abdali's camp was short of provisions and that the hot weather would set in shortly and Abdali's troops finding the sum intolerable would either return or attack them to their disadvantage. But Adina Beg who was opposed to Kaura Mal, pleaded for immediate action. Mir Mannu, prompted by his own ardour and courage adopted the course suggested by Adina Beg.<sup>19</sup>

In the battle of Mahmud Buti near Lahore Kaura Mal faced the enemy bravely but on the advice of Adina Beg, Mir Mannu asked Kaura Mal to withdraw from the battle. As soon as Kaura Mal left his position, the Afghans opened fire on him but Dewan's men gave a determined fight. In the course of fighting Kaura Mal's elephant fell on the ground. When the Diwan was trying to mount another elephant Adina Beg Khan at once gave a signal to Bazid Khan Kasuria to kill the Diwan. The compliance was instantaneous. The author of *Farhat-un-Nazirin* charged Adina Beg with shooting Kaura Mal from behind.<sup>20</sup> Ali-ud-Din Mufti writes that Kaura Mal was shot by some person at the instigation of Adina Beg Khan.<sup>21</sup> It seems quite probable that Adina Beg, if not directly, was responsible for his death in an indirect manner. Just at this time a Durrani marched forward and cutting off Diwan's head carried it away. Shortly after, Mannu surrendered and Ahmad Shah Durrani pardoned him

18. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 402 (ed. 1914); Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, pp. 162-63.

19. Mir Ali Azad, *Khazana-i-Amira*, p. 98; *Farhat-un-Nazirin*, Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. VII, p. 44.

and confirmed him as the governor of Lahore.

Now Mir Mannu got free to deal with the Sikhs more firmly. He deputed Adina Beg Khan and Sadiq Beg Khan to punish the Sikhs in the Jullundur Doab where they had returned from Hissar. Adina Beg Khan hailed this opportunity, in order to wash away the suspicions attached to his treachery at Lahore during the time of the Durrani's third invasion.<sup>22</sup> These commanders entered the Jullundur Doab in pursuit of the Sikhs. They received intelligence about the assembling of the Sikhs near Makhawal, probably to celebrate the Baisakhi festival at Anandpur. The Sikhs were taken quite unawares as they were engrossed in festivities and a large number of them were put to sword. But such was their hardihood and doggedness that soon after they began to organise themselves and assert. Malcolm blames Adina Beg for the Sikhs activities. He writes, "that able but artful chief (Adina Beg Khan) considered this turbulent tribe in no other light than as the means of his personal advancement, he was careful not to reduce them altogether, but after defeating them in an action, which was fought near Makhawal, he entered into a secret understanding with them, by which, though their excursions were limited, they enjoyed a security to which they had been unaccustomed, and from which they gathered strength and resources for future efforts."<sup>23</sup> To keep Mir Mannu in good humour Adina Beg would send 40 to 50 Sikh captives from the Jullundur Doab who were killed with wooden hammers at Shahid Ganj, Lahore.<sup>24</sup> In 1752 Adina Beg established a town at a place 16 kms. north of Gurdaspur on the Hasli canal or Shah Nahar named after him as Adinapur or Adina Nagar.<sup>25</sup>

After Mir Mannu's death, governors changed hands in quick succession. Adina Beg took advantage of the situation and established his independence in the Jullundur Doab owing his allegiance neither to Delhi nor to Kabul. He increased his resources and maintained peace in the territory under his charge.

Adina Beg took advantage of the unrest prevailing in the provincial

20. *Farhat-un-Nazirin*, Elliot and Dowson, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 168.

21. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 210.

22. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 113 (ed. 1978).

23. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 92; Cf. Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, p. 314.

24. *Tahmas Nama*, p. 19.

25. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, p. 22; *Gurdaspur Gazetteer* (1891), p. 26.

capital. He marched upon Lahore towards the end of 1755, drove away Abdullah and appointed Sadiq Beg Khan, to manage the state affairs. Mughlani Begum secretly sought help from the Durrani chief who despatched Jahan Khan to restore her to the subedari. Sadiq Beg fled to Sirhind (in December 1755). In March 1756 Imad-ul-Mulk, the Wazir of Delhi, made Mughlani Begum captive, confiscated her property and entrusted the government of Lahore and Multan to Adina Beg Khan for a tribute of 30 lakh rupees a year, and appointed Sayid Jamil-ud-Din Khan in charge of Lahore as Adina Beg's assistant. Khwaja Abdullah, with the help of a Durrani contingent from Qandhar, expelled Jamil-ud-Din and himself became the viceroy on 4th October 1756.<sup>26</sup>

Adina Beg collected a huge army of 50,000 horse and nearly the same number of foot to fight against Qutab Khan Rohilla whom he defeated and killed on April 11, 1755 on the bank of the Satluj opposite Ropar. He took over the administration of Sirhind and marched up to Shahbad, Thanesar, Ghuram, Mansurpur and Mustfabad. Emperor Alamgir II conferred on Adina Beg Khan the title of Zafar Jang Bahadur.<sup>27</sup>

After this, Adina Beg turned his attention to Lahore, where Khwaja Abdullah, on account of his misrule and misdeeds, had become very unpopular. Adina drove him out and appointed Sadiq Beg Khan his deputy, to manage state affairs. On Mughlani Begum's request to Ahmad Shah Abdali for help the latter sent Jahan Khan with two contingents to Lahore. Sadiq Beg fled to Sirhind and the Begum was restored to the *subadari* of Lahore with Khwaja Abdullah as her deputy. In the meantime, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia gained victory over Adina Beg Khan in the battle of Khadur and compelled him to cede Fatehbad on the Beas.<sup>28</sup>

Adina Beg Khan hobnobbed with Imad-ul-Mulk, the Wazir of Delhi, and with a view to complying with the request of Mughlani Begum to do away with Abdullah, the governor of Lahore, sent 10000 troops under Sadiq Beg Khan to Lahore. Abdullah Khan sensing trouble left the city and fled to Jammu. The Begum took the reins of government in her hands once again. She sent her daughter Umda

26. *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, p. 52.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-88.

28. Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 458.

Begum along with a suitable dowry to the camp of the Wazir, Imad-ul-Mulk at Sirhind where she arrived on 4th March 1756. The Wazir afterwards secured the person of the Begum forcibly through Sadiq Beg Khan and took her with him to Delhi.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Adina Beg Khan Appointed Governor of Lahore and Multan**

The Wazir of Delhi appointed Adina Beg as the governor of Lahore and Multan on an annual tribute of thirty lakh rupees. The Wazir, thereafter, left for the imperial capital on May 9, 1756, arriving there on July 19, 1756.<sup>30</sup> Sayid Jamil Khan administered the province well but his rule was short. Mughlani Begum did not receive good treatment at the hands of the Wazir of Delhi. She addressed some secret letters to Ahmad Shah Abdali inviting him to attack India, who agreed. He reached Peshawar in November 1756. None offered any resistance to him. Adina Beg Khan fled to the waterless tract of Hansi and Hissar.<sup>31</sup> The Sikhs had the best opportunity to punish the people of the Doab who had often helped Adina Beg against them.<sup>32</sup>

After some time Adina Beg retired to the hills<sup>33</sup> in Hoshiarpur district in the region of Garli in Bharwain. Ahmad Shah Abdali, while on his march to Delhi, was prayed upon by the Sikhs. The baggage of the Afghans was plundered. Ahmad Shah's son Timur Shah was also robbed as is testified by a Maratha despatch dated March 1757. It reads: "At the end of March 1757 when the front division of Abdali's army under Prince Timur was transporting the plundered wealth of Delhi to Lahore, Ala Singh, in concert with other Sikh robbers had barred his path at Sanaur near Patiala and robbed him of half of his treasures and again attacked and plundered him at Malerkotla. So great had been the success of these brigands that rumours had magnified it into the prince's captivity and even death at their hands."<sup>34</sup>

29. *Tahmas Nama*, p. 39; *Siyar-ul-Mutakhhirin*, III, p. 53; *Delhi Chronicle*, p. 51, news dated 28 March 1756; J.N. Sarkar, II, p. 60.

30. *Tahmas Nama*, p. 38; *Khazana-i-Amira*, p. 52; *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, pp. 69-70, 75; *Delhi Chronicle*, news dated 19 July 1756, p. 52; Sohan Lal Suri, I, pp. 139-40; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Vol. I, p. 215; J. N. Sarkar, II, pp. 60-61.

31. *Kazana-i-Amira*, p. 99.

32. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 131.

33. Cf. Forster, *Travels*, I, p. 317.

34. Rajwade, Vol. I, p. 85.

So the Durrani<sup>35</sup> were strongly exercised against the Sikhs. Jahan Khan from religious zeal destroyed and polluted the places of worship of the Sikhs at Amritsar. Jahan Khan's wrath had also found a victim in a Sikh priest named Sodhi Wadbhag Singh of Kartarpur, who led a peaceful and religious life. According to Miskin, "Sodhi Wadbhag Singh, in charge of Gurdwara Tham Sahib, was the famous chief of the territory, nay, he was a well-known and respectable religious guide of the Sikhs and was the proprietor (of land) worth lakhs of revenue. The men following the Afghan practice, beat him so hard that he was brought to death's door and he saved his life only by escaping in the night to an unknown village, Bahiri, in Hoshiarpur District,<sup>35</sup> now called Derah Guru Wadbhag Singh 40 kms. from Hoshiarpur in the hills.

The vigorous fanatical outrages committed by Jahan Khan on the Sikhs were deeply resented by them. With a view to increasing their power the Sikhs retired to the Shiwalik hills in the north of Hoshiarpur where they concerted a plan of action in which they were soon joined by Adina Beg Khan.

After taking charge of the Punjab, Jahan Khan called upon Adina Beg to take up the administration of Jullundur Doab and to present himself at Lahore. Adina Beg rightly nursed suspicions against Jahan Khan. He evaded prompt compliance. Jahan Khan pillaged Jullundur Doab and threatened Adina Beg with pursuit and punishment. The wary Adina Beg offered to undertake the administration of the Doab provided he was exempted from attending the court. Jahan Khan agreed and he issued to him a patent and a *khillat*. But after some time Jahan Khan demanded Adina's immediate presence at Lahore. Distrusting the Afghan general, Adina Beg refused to come to Lahore. Jahan Khan was annoyed and despatched a strong detachment of his troops under Murad Khan to seize Adina. Sadiq Beg Khan, the deputy governor of Sirhind, Khwaja Mirza Khan and Raja Bhup Singh, a famous chief of the hill territories, at the head of their contingents, joined Murad Khan.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand Adina Beg won over Sodhi Wadbhag Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and the whole of the Dal Khalsa got ready

35. Miskin, p. 165 (Br. ML., MS., JNS rotograph) quoted by Hari Ram Gupta, Vol. II, p. 137 (ed. 1978).

36. Ghulam Ali, *Khazana-i-Amira*, I, pp. 55-56; Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 156.

to fight on his side.<sup>37</sup>

Murad Khan, crossing river Beas arrayed his forces against Adina Beg Khan. The Afghans were severely defeated and their baggage and stores fell into the hands of Adina Beg. The Sikhs, then, ravaged all the districts of the Doab. Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami, Rattan Singh Bhangu and Giani Gian Singh state that the Sikhs under the explicit injunctions of Sodhi Wadbhag Singh burnt the city of Jullundur, the home of Nasir Ali, who was responsible for the atrocities committed at Kartarpur.<sup>38</sup> His dead body was dragged out of his grave and subjected to extreme indignities.

To reward the Sikhs for their help Adina Beg Khan paid them a lakh and a quarter of rupees as *rakhi* or protection money for the Jullundur Doab. To ingratiate himself further with them, he acknowledged himself to be a sort of round-head Sikh, and brought *karah parsad* (community sweet pudding) worth a thousand rupees to be distributed among them. Adina Beg Khan, from fear of Jahan Khan, took refuge in the impenetrable retreats of Nalagarh hills and Jahan Khan appointed Sarfraz Khan to the *faujdari* of the Jullundur Doab.<sup>39</sup>

Tahmas Khan, an eye witness, writes that the Sikhs wreaked their malice on Jahan Khan. They attacked the Afghans everywhere. Even the environs of Lahore were not safe. Every night thousands of Sikhs used to fall upon the city and plundered the suburbs lying outside the walls, but no force was sent out to repel them and the city gates were closed one hour after nightfall. The government of the province was paralysed.<sup>40</sup> Bakht Mal writes, "Thousands of Sikhs in a body trampled down Lahore from one end to the other under the hoofs of their horses, and allowed none to escape unscathed."<sup>41</sup>

A Marathi despatch says, "The Sikhs gathered together, by our (i. e., Maratha) advice, began to upset Abdali's rule, from some places they expelled his outposts. They defeated Sadat Khan Afridi, plundered

37. Ghulam Ali, *Khazana-i-Amira*, I, pp. 55-56 (written in 1762-63, printed Cawnpore, 1871). *Siyar-ul-Mutakhhirin*, III, p. 64 (printed Calcutta, 1833); Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, p. 156.

38. Ghulam Ali Azad, I, p. 56; Rattan Singh Bhangu, pp. 420-21 (ed. 1914); Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-71.

39. Hari Ram Gupta, Vol. II, p. 140 (ed. 1978); Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 157.

40. *Tahmas Nama*, p. 63 (English trans.).

41. Bakht Mal, p. 81.

all the Jullundur Doab, and forced him to flee to the hills. By order of the Subedar, Khwaja Ubaid Khan came from Lahore with 20,000 horse and foot to fight the Sikhs. In the end he was defeated, many of his captains were slain, all his camp and baggage were plundered and all the artillery left behind by Abdali, was captured.<sup>42</sup>

#### **Adina Invites Marathas**

Adina Beg Khan keenly felt the loss of his office. He felt that the Durrani wrath was bound to fall upon him sooner or later. So a communication was despatched to Raghunath Rao, then in Delhi, to come and extend the Maratha dominion as far as Indus, promising to pay rupees one lakh for a day of march and fifty thousand for a day of halt.<sup>43</sup> The Maratha chief readily accepted the invitation. They made an agreement with Emperor Alamgir II and his Prime Minister Imad-ul-Mulk to recover the lost province of the Mughal Empire from the occupation of Ahmad Shah Abdali. They promised to pay into the imperial treasury half of the revenue of the Punjab and were to be responsible for its administration and security.<sup>44</sup> They moved towards the north on March 9, 1758. Raghunath Rao reached Sirhind where Adina Beg and his Sikh allies joined him. Abdus Samad Khan, the Abdali's governor of Sirhind, had fortified his capital but could not withstand the attack and was forced to fly. The Sikhs were the first to enter. They subjected the hated city to wholesale plunder, pulling down houses and digging up floors in search of hidden hoards.<sup>45</sup> A contemporary writer of Delhi has given the following account of the Maratha siege and capture of Sirhind in March 1758:

"The Maratha troops beyond number (said to be two lakhs of men) from this side, and Adina Beg Khan collecting an army of the Sikhs, worshippers of Nanak, who practised highway robbery in the province of Punjab, from the other side of the Satluj, came to Sirhind. Abdus Samad Khan, Abdali's governor, finding himself unable to

42. *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*, II, p. 83; Jadu Nath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, pp. 69-70.

43. Miskin, *Tahmas Nama*, p. 64; *Khazana-i-Amira*, p. 100; Ghulam Ali, I, p. 56; *Siyar-ul-Mutakhhirin*, III, p. 64; *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, p. 11.

44. *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*, XXVII, p. 205; *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, pp. 11-12; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh-Guru Khalsa*, II, pp. 180-81 (1970).

45. Miskin, *Tahmas Nama*, p. 64 (Eng. tr.); *Khazana-i-Amira*, p. 100; Ghulam Hussain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakhhirin*, p. 909 (Kanpur, 1897).

fight, shut himself in the fort. The Maratha army and Adina Beg Khan laid siege to the place. After a few days Abdus Samad Khan and Jangbaz Khan fled away. The Marathas overtook and captured them.<sup>46</sup>

The Marathas got angry with the Sikhs for having stolen a march over them in the matter of plunder, but the Sikhs claimed priority because of their old grudge against the town of Sirhind and also on account of their having made it a condition with Adina Beg. The dispute was shortly settled and leaving Sirhind they marched towards Lahore, the Sikhs keeping two stages ahead of the Marathas.<sup>47</sup> The combined forces crossed the Satluj without any opposition from the Lahore government. Jahan Khan who had come up to Beas sought safety in retiring to Lahore. From there he moved out with Timur to Shahdara on April 18, 1758 and next day left for Kabul.

The Sikhs and the Marathas entered Lahore on April 19, and killed all the Uzbek, Qazilbash and Afghan soldiers left by Timur. The other captives were taken to Amritsar to clean the sacred tank, desecrated and filled by Ahmad Shah and Jahan Khan.<sup>48</sup> According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti among the visitors to Amritsar were the Maratha chiefs who paid their respects to the Sikhs Temple along with the Sikh Sardars and were much honoured.<sup>49</sup>

The prominent Sikh leaders who took part in this campaign on the side of Adina Beg were Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Tara Singh Gaiba, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Hari Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Jhanda Singh Bhangis. The Maratha leader, Raghunath Rao, after a stay at Lahore for less than a month, realized that it would be impossible for them to hold the Punjab on the strength of a few alien garrisons in the face of the rising power of the Sikhs. He, therefore, decided to leave the government in the hands of Adina Beg in return for an annual tribute of seventy five lakhs. On May 10, 1758 the main army under Raghunath Rao moved out of Lahore.

46. SPD. XXVII, p. 220; *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, p. 12 (English Version, p. 13).

47. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, pp. 330-31 (ed. 1939) ; *Tazkira-i-Imad-ul-Mulk*, pp. 379-80, MS.

48. *Tahmas Nama*, pp. 81-83 ; *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*, XXVII, p. 218 ; Budh Singh, *Gujhe Hire*, p. 37 (1927).

49. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, p. 220.



Adina Beg Khan lived to enjoy the governorship of Lahore only for four months. During this short period he made desperate efforts to strengthen his position which he could do only by extirpating his erstwhile allies, the Sikhs, who were going from strength to strength at his expense. Adina Beg shifted his headquarters from Lahore to Adinanagar, 130 kms north of Lahore and in the Batala region. He gathered a large army there consisting of five thousand horse and nine thousand foot. To these were added ten thousand feudal troops contributed by different hill chiefs.<sup>50</sup> According to Ahmad Shah Batalia he ordered the *zamindars* of the Punjab to take strong measures to destroy the Sikhs wherever found. Mirza Aziz Bakhshi, a trusted noble, was placed at the head of an expeditionary force, with a contingent of a thousand carpenters to cut down the forest trees which gave shelter to the rebeles. Nand Singh Sanghania along with Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jai Singh Kanaihya and Amar Singh Kingra displayed great bravery when they were besieged in Ram Rauni. At length they made a hole in the wall of the fort and slipped away, leaving a few dead or captured.<sup>51</sup>

Another expedition under the command of Diwan Hira Mal and Mahant Aqil Das Niranjania of Jandiala was sent against the Sikhs. It suffered a defeat near Qadian. Diwan Hira Lal was killed and his troops dispersed, leaving much bag and baggage in the hands of the victors.<sup>52</sup> "The old fox had been the secret ally of the Sikhs, who, to enhance his own plans of ambition, had been unconsciously helping the cause of the Sikhs. Towards the end of his life when he thought he had removed all the obstacles in his way—the Afghans and the Marathas—he began to pull down the very scaffolding with which he had raised himself, we mean the Sikhs. But he was too late. The Sikhs were no longer the mere refugees hunted from place to place at the whim of the rulers. They had become a real power in the land, without whose co-operation nobody could establish his rule."<sup>53</sup>

The repression of the Sikhs would have continued unabated if it had not been cut short by the death of Adina Beg, which occurred

50. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, p. 13, MS., GS.

51. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix* to Sohan Lal's I, pp. 18-19; MacGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, pp. 131-32.

52. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, I, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

53. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 162.

on September 15, 1758, caused by sudden illness with colic. He quietly passed away at Batala (according to *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, he died at Khanpur).<sup>54</sup> His dead body was buried at Khanpur near Hoshiarpur according to his will and a beautiful tomb was built over his mortal remains. Different authors have assigned different dates to the event of his death. A Marathi letter<sup>55</sup> places it on 5th September 1758, *Farhat-un-Nazirin*<sup>56</sup> places it at 14th September 1758 and *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*<sup>57</sup> assigns 13th October 1758.

With the passing away of Adina Beg Khan, the only capable governor of the Punjab, after Muin-ul-Mulk, was gone. For the Sikhs, however, his death was a blessing because with the province in his hand he had planned to crush the Sikhs and he had been pursuing anti-Sikh policy more vigorously than ever. Adina was also lucky in his death, because the overwhelming forces of Ahmad Shah Abdali which invaded India one year later and which shattered the Maratha power at the battle of Panipat would have been first directed against him to punish him for driving Timur Shah from the Punjab.

The death of Adina Beg Khan was a signal for the forces of disruption, chaos and confusion to display themselves in the Punjab. The Sikhs soon spread themselves over the Punjab.

From Adina Beg's overall demeanour he appears to be artfully crafty, extremely ambitious and awfully selfish. To safeguard his self-interests he could resort to any stratagem, even deceit. He felt no pricks of conscience while advising Shah Nawaz Khan to invite the Durrani on the one hand and secretly reporting against it to Delhi Government. He invited the Marathas against Prince Timur and yet secretly wrote to him that he was joining the Maratha invaders only as a matter of policy and not out of any conviction. He owed a lot to Mir Mannu and yet he clandestinely planned the liquidation of Diwan Kaura Mall, a close and confidant associate of Mir Mannu. Adina Beg displayed dexterous duplicity in his friendship with the Sikhs but it was all politically and selfishly motivated friendship. He would make use of them when he thought it necessary and would turn his back to them when they no longer served his purpose. On the political chess-board

54. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, p. 24 (English tr. p. 25).

55. *Selections from Peshwa Daftars*, II, p. 96.

56. See Elliot and Dowson's *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. VIII, p. 169.

57. Quoted by Jadu Nath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, pp. 77.

he always found them an integral part of his strategy to scale the political heights and as such they were treated with tact. Under the prevailing circumstances when the king of Delhi had been reduced to a cipher and there was utter confusion and lawlessness in the provinces of Lahore and Multan Adina Beg was not wrong in saying good-bye to higher moral principles.

Adina Beg successfully held the balance between the Delhi Emperor Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Sikhs and the Marathas. He was always ready and capable of intriguing with any power that could be useful for him. The fortunes of other officials rose and fell with the change of government either at Delhi or at Lahore but Adina Beg Khan enjoyed an almost permanent position. In his relations with the governors of Lahore he played a very cautious role. "He cleverly used gifts, arms and favours and often employed a mixture of threat and promise, gratification and persecution, as it suited the circumstances, in order to amuse and subdue the Sikhs. He purchased their favour and service when too weak to coerce them, sought their help by conceding all their demands when he wished to regain the government; and persecuted them when he found himself well-established and strong enough to do so."<sup>58</sup> He amused the Sikhs, despised the Delhi court, bewildered the Afghans and influenced Marathas effectively in his favour to break the power of both the Sikhs and the Afghans and to become independent himself. His approach to the political problems was never inspired by any lofty moral principles.

Tahmas Khan Miskin who came into close contact with Adina Beg Khan writes: "Adina Beg Khan had been the *faujdar* of Doab since the time of Abdus Samad Khan, governor of the Punjab. He had kept the governor pleased by his behaviour and prompt despatch of the annual dues from the district (Jullundur Doab). His administration of the Doab was so excellent that during his reign not a single complaint was heard. Nor was there any highway robbery within his jurisdiction. Of his other excellent qualities of head and heart, how much can I write? In meeting out justice he had no equal. He had a force of ten thousand cavalry and infantry at his disposal."<sup>59</sup>

Adina Beg Khan was a very intelligent and capable man. He had his news-messengers posted with every Amir, Wazir, Raja and

58. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, vol. II, p. 439 (ed. 1978).

59. *Tahmas Nama* (English version by Setu Madhava Rao), pp. 63-64.

Sardar. Therefore, it was not possible to deceive him or entrap him unawares.<sup>60</sup> He had great administrative acumen. He was very particular about the revenue collection and he would never tolerate recalcitrance on the part of the landlords. At times he was in a financial difficulty. Once he pretended indisposition and sent for the physician. A rich Gosain physician told him that he was not suffering from any disease. Adina Beg told him that he was suffering from the shortage of funds. The physician could get his release only after offering him two dishes full of gold coins.<sup>61</sup>

Adina Beg had great regard for the Sayyids. It is told that in his old age, about the year of 1757, an year before death, he married a beautiful woman who was destitute of character. At bed-time he inquired of her former life. She told that she was of a Sayyid caste. As soon as he heard these words he moved back and gave her divorce and called her mother and he felt extremely sorry for his impudence to have married a woman who belonged to a respectable Sayyid caste. He supported her during his life and after his death she is said to have conducted herself honestly and kept her chastity until she died.<sup>62</sup>

According to his biographer, Adina Beg had been liberal and excessively affectionate upon his subjects and endeavoured perpetually to promote the welfare of the country. But he bore an aversion and dislike for the following categories of persons. The first being the *ganungos* whom he always hated and whenever he happened to pass by their spacious buildings and estates he used to say that these were constructed by the materials of human blood and bones. The second were the money-changers and bankers. They were the last asylum of the robbers and thieves and they hoarded money by means of fraud, dishonesty and cheating. The third were the Afghans who were most ignorant and awkward people, sanguine in their habits, and never ceased to shed blood and exercise tyranny.<sup>63</sup>

He applied Muslim law as a rule. An interesting incident shows his method of functioning in the administration of justice. One day, in Jullundur city, he was passing before the houses of the Qazis (judges of Muslim law) when he saw a quantity of ground poppy lying outside their houses. He said, 'if paganism rises from Mecca

60. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op cit.*, Vol. I, p. 219.

61. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, pp. 16-17 (English tr. pp. 17-18).

62. *Ibid.*, p. 24-25 (English tr. p. 26).

63. *Ibid.*, p. 24 (English tr. p. 25).

where shall be found Muhammadanism.' He imposed a fine of 30,000 rupees on the Qazis for breaking the law of the Holy Quran.<sup>64</sup>

According to *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, Adina did not marry and hence he had no issue. This statement seems incorrect. There are references available in the contemporary works regarding his family. For example, according to a Marathi letter, Adina's son paid the arrears of the tribute of his father to Datta Ji Sindhia who lay encamped at Machhiwara in April 1759. According to a contemporary source, *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, Adina Beg married his daughter to Khwaja Mirza Khan. The author of *Khazana-i-Amira*<sup>65</sup> writes that on Adina Beg's death, the Marathas appointed Adina's widow to the governorship of Jullundur Doab. Sayyid Ghulam Hussain also states that Adina Beg left behind him a widow and a son who fled to Delhi in October 1759, on the occasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion.<sup>66</sup>

64. *Ibid.*, p. 18 (Eng. trans. pp. 19-20).

65. Ghulam Ali Azad Mir, *Khazana-i-Amira*, p. 101.

66. Ghulam Hussain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin*, III, p. 64.

## Faizullapur or Singhpuria Misal

DR BHAGAT SINGH\*

Kapur Singh, the founder of this Misal, was the son of Chaudhary Dalip Singh Virk, Jat, of Faizullapur<sup>1</sup> situated near Amritsar. He was born in A. D. 1697 (BK. 1754),<sup>2</sup> two years before the foundation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. Because of his inability to pay the government revenue all his domestic articles were sold away by the Government officials to make good the amount due from him.<sup>3</sup> In utter penury he left his place. He collected some followers, equipped them with horses and weapons and launched upon a career of chivalry, fighting against the Mughal Government that was harassing the Sikhs. Kapur Singh was fired with the enthusiasm of a crusader. He had strong conviction in the ultimate success of the Khalsa. He was always full of optimism that was unsurpassed. He always entertained high aims and made plans to achieve them. Of the two men referred to in the following maxim he belonged to the second category. 'Two men looked through prison bars, one saw the mud, the other stars.' He attacked Faizullapur, killed its chief Faizulla and occupied the place and its surrounding areas.<sup>4</sup> He changed the name of Faizullapur to Singhpur and the Misal which took its name from the village also began to be called Singhpuria Misal.<sup>5</sup> The revenue of the area was used by Kapur Singh for equipping his men with horses and weapons.

Kapur Singh is also said to have been with the companions of

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1. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*, p. 69; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *appendix to* Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 17; Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, IV, p. 1; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, I, p. 207; Kanaihya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 106; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, pp. 202-03.

Prem Singh writes in his book *Nawab Kapur Singh* (p. 12), that Kapur Singh was the resident of village Kaloke in the *pargana* of Sheikhpura. He asserts that his information is based on the evidence of Baba Asa Singh who belonged to Kapur Singh's Virk family.

2. Prem Singh, *Nawab Kapur Singh*, p. 17.

3. Bute Shah, IV, p. 1.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 322.

Banda Singh in his early life. Because of his intrepidity and bravery some of the Sikhs took him as their Sardar.<sup>6</sup> He was a tall and stoutly built man and always seemed full of life, dynamism and dash. He possessed sharp intellect, penetrating shrewdness and quick power of grasping. He had learnt the use of weapons as sword, spear, arrow and gun and had become an expert in horse-riding from his early days. In his free time he indulged in sham fighting, in which once by an accident he got a stroke of a companion's sword on his shoulder. He was so seriously wounded that it seemed that he would not survive the wound. But ultimately he recovered from the injury after a long time and resumed his activities.<sup>7</sup> Kapur Singh took baptism of the double-edged sword from Bhai Mani Singh in A.D. 1721 at Amritsar.<sup>8</sup>

Zakariya Khan succeeded his father Samad Khan to the governorship of the Punjab from 1726 to 1745. From 1726 to 1732 the young governor spared no pains in inflicting the heaviest punishments on the Sikhs. When Tara Singh of village Van was killed in 1726 along with his 22 companions by a contingent of 2200 horseman, sent from Lahore by Zakariya Khan, the Sikhs all over the Central Punjab got stirred up. They accepted the challenge of the new governor. They vowed to wreak their vengeance on the government. Kapur Singh, who was very much exercised over the tragedy, came to Amritsar accompanied by many youngmen and joined the *jatha* of Diwan Darbara Singh. In the following years he distinguished himself as a brave, sagacious and prudent man. He led the Sikhs on many occasions into many dangerous situations and his success established him as an able organizer and a successful and competent leader. The Sikhs under Kapur Singh waylaid and looted the revenue money taken from the *pargana* headquarters to the provincial treasury at Lahore. The state machinery sometimes found itself helpless against the activities of the Sikhs and at times there were serious confrontations between the state contingents and the Sikhs with heavy human losses.

The persecution by the state and revenge by the Sikhs continued for some years until the government found this method of dealing with them as ineffective and they tried to placate them. In 1733

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6, Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix*, p. 17.

7. Prem Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

8. Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, p. 907 (5th edition).

Zakariya Khan, the governor of the Punjab, gave a suggestion to the Delhi government for a grant and a title for the Sikhs. The proposal was endorsed by the Central Government. Subeg Singh, a government contractor (according to some a Persian knowing clerk in a government office at Lahore), was deputed by Zakariya Khan to negotiate with the Sikhs. He met the Sikhs assembled at Akal Takhat and offered them the title of 'Nawab' on behalf of the government, along with a *jagir*, comprising the *parganas* of Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Jhabal of which the total annual income was about a hundred thousand rupees.<sup>9</sup> The immediate reaction of the Khalsa was that of rejection but on further consideration they accepted it. The offer was made to Diwan Darbara Singh, a prominent leader, but he declined the offer saying, "What is the *Nawabship* to us who have been promised a kingdom by the Guru? The word of the Guru must be fulfilled. The Khalsa, meant to rule freely, cannot accept a subordinate position."<sup>10</sup> The offer was rejected by some other Sikhs also. Then it was decided to be conferred upon some one noted for service. Kapur Singh Faizullapur, who was then waving a big fan over the assembly, was selected for the honour. He accepted it only after it had been sanctified by touch of the feet of the five members of the Khalsa.<sup>11</sup>

The *khilat* presented by the envoy comprised of three pieces, a *dastar* or turban, a *jama* or gown and a *patka* or girdle. The envoy also handed over the letter granting the *jagir* and the title. Thus Kapur Singh became a Nawab as well as a *jagirdar* on the condition that he would never be called upon to attend the court either at the capital or in camp.

Nawab Kapur Singh was placed in charge of the *langar*, general stores and stables of the horses. It was really a difficult job to feed thousands of men and horses but he acquitted himself of his duties wonderfully. Darbara Singh looked after the order and discipline among the Sikhs. After Darbara Singh's death in 1734 the whole burden and responsibility devolved upon the shoulders of Kapur Singh. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, 'after the conferment of Nawabship on Kapur Singh, he began to be revered by the Sikhs as a

9. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 121; Cf. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, I, p. 268.

10. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.



spiritual leader,<sup>12</sup> Kapur Singh began to be honoured by the Muslims. The revenue of his *jagir* was collected by them and deposited with him.<sup>13</sup>

The agreement with government gave a little breathing time to the Sikhs who again began to live in their homes. But it was a short-lived peace. Zakariya Khan suggested to Nawab Kapur Singh that the government was willing to enlist the young Sikhs in the imperial army. The proposal was rejected. The government expected of the Sikhs to beat their swords into plough shares and live as peaceful and law-abiding citizens. The governor suggested that the government would remit full revenues if they settled as peaceful agriculturists. Kapur Singh did not give any assurance as they were not of such pliable stuff.<sup>14</sup> Shortly, thereafter, they again went out of government's favour. The government confiscated the *jagir* in 1735 and the hostilities between the two were resumed and the Sikhs were declared outlawed. They secretly moved about in small groups. In 1734 Kapur Singh divided the disintegrated fabric of these Sikhs into two *Dals* (groups).

The word *Dal* is a Punjabi expression meaning a horde and suggests the notion of a group with a definite mission or objective before it. One group was named Budha Dal, the League of the Elders, which comprised men above the age of forty and the other was named Taruna Dal, League of the Young, which consisted of the young Sikhs below that age. The Budha Dal was assigned the duty of looking after the Sikh holy places and the propagation of the Sikh faith. The Taruna Dal was to undertake the more difficult task of the defence of the community. Though Kapur Singh was in charge of the first section, but because of his respectful position amongst the Sikhs, he acted as a common link between the two Dals, that were organised under the leadership of the seasoned Sikh soldiers of the days of Banda Singh.<sup>15</sup> Some of them had seen the days of Guru Gobind Singh. Later, Kapur Singh reorganised the Taruna Dal into five sections, each led by a separate *jathedar* (group leader). Gradually the number of the *jathas* (groups) rose. As ambitious and spirited youngmen

12. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Bute Shah, IV. p. 4.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

14. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.

15. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix to Daftar I of Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 16.

formed their separate *jathas* they were welcomed by the leading Sardars who encouraged them to carry on a guerrilla warfare against the government. The *Dals* served a very useful purpose of providing a number of leaders.<sup>16</sup>

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was introduced to Kapur Singh at an early date. In the words of Muhammad Latif, "when Kapur Singh went to Bagh Singh's house he was greatly pleased at seeing the latter's widowed sister playing on the *rubab* with her long loose hair dishevelled, singing ballads in adoration of the Guru, her beautiful little son, Jassa Singh playing by her side. Kapur Singh blessed her for devotion to the faith, and asked her to give him the little boy, whose gestures gave promise of a brilliant future. The mother, according to the wishes of the Sikh chief, gave him charge of the boy, and from that moment Kapur Singh treated Jassa Singh as his own son."<sup>17</sup> Under Kapur Singh's guidance Jassa Singh rose to be the leader of the Sikh community.

With the conferment of a *jagir* to the Sikhs it was not believed that the peace between the Government and the Sikhs would last very long. The Sikhs could not remain satisfied, for all time to come, with small *jagir*, granted to them by Zakariya Khan and at the same time the government could not be a passive spectator to the rapidly growing power and the number of the Sikhs. Under the orders of Zakariya Khan and under the pretext that the Sikhs had violated the promise of remaining peaceful, the government contingent occupied the *jagir* just before the harvest of 1735.

Under the command of Kapur Singh, the *Budha Dal* moved away to the Malwa and encamped at village Thikri. There, Kapur Singh was received with a warm welcome by Ala Singh, who took baptism at his hands.<sup>18</sup> In the memory of the performance of the ceremony of *amrit* at the village Thikri a well was dug. "He (Kapur Singh) converted a large number of people, Jats, carpenters, weavers, *jhiwars*, *chhatris* and others to the persuasion of Gobind, and the religious respect in which he was held was so great, that initiation into the

16. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 62.

17. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

18. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-06; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, I, p. 268; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

*pahul* of the Guru with his hands was considered a great distinction."<sup>19</sup> Jai Singh Kanaihya<sup>20</sup> and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia<sup>21</sup> also took *pahul* at the hands of Kapur Singh. The Sikhs used to pride themselves on having been baptised by such a revered and undisputed leader of the Sikh community as Kapur Singh was.

Kapur Singh led the community through very difficult times. The Sikhs faced heroically the oppressive rule of the Lahore government and their all out campaign to destroy the Sikh community root and branch and they met bravely a chain of foreign invasions under Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. Kapur Singh led the community from one success to another till the Sikhs became a force to be reckoned with.

But the Sikhs suffered immensely during Zakariya Khan's period. Zakariya Khan, knowing full well the veneration in which the Sikhs held their hair, ordered that their hair and beards be removed. This order drove the Sikhs in thousands into the forests and the hills.<sup>22</sup> Zakariya Khan sent out moving columns in all directions to hunt them out,<sup>23</sup> and the punitive parties combed the villages and forests and daily brought batches of Sikhs in chains who were publicly beheaded at Lahore at the *nakhas* (horse market), now called the Shahidganj. The whole machinery of the government including *muqadams*, *chaudharies* and the non-official *zamindars*, was set into motion to see that the Sikhs found no shelter within their areas. Under the inspiring guidance of Kapur Singh, "High moral values, service, discipline and sacrifice" were the ever guiding mottos of the Sikhs. To them their earthly belongings and bodies were not their own but belonged to the Guru who had merged his personality into the Khalsa. They believed that sacrifice made in the cause of the *panth* would place them in the lap of their Guru. We do not find any instance in Sikh history where a captured Sikh gave up his religion to save his life.<sup>24</sup>

Despite immense hardships the Sikh community took further

19. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-23; Cf. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 268; Cf. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

20. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Vol. I, p. 271.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 310; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 4 (3rd copy), Dr. Ganda Singh's personal Collection, at Patiala.

22. Kanaiya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

23. Ganesh Das Badehra, p. 124; Cf. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

24. Ganesh Das, p. 126; Khushwaqat Rai, MS., G. S. p. 48; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

strides in challenging the government authorities, under the stewardship of Kapur Singh.

Sardar Kapur Singh was a very brave and a fearless man.<sup>25</sup> He would always fight against his enemies in the front ranks. He had a large number of wounds dotting his body. Sometimes he jumped into very dangerous situations showing utter disregard to his personal safety. Once accompanied by handful of men, he entered Lahore and sat on the seat of the *Kotwal* of the town for some time, apparently to get a portion of the revenue of the city. Before a contingent under the command of Izzat Khan, the acting deputy of Muin, moved in action against Kapur Singh he managed to move out safely.<sup>26</sup>

During Nadir Shah's return march in 1739 he was taught a lesson by the Sikhs under the command of Kapur Singh. The invaders were relieved of their booty.

During one of his campaigns in the cis-Satluj areas Nawab Kapur Singh went up to Delhi. On his way he realised tribute from the Nawab of Jhajjar, and Ismail Khan, Rais of Dadri. Then he chastised the Nawabs of Dojana and Pataudi. Faiz Talab Khan of Pataudi paid heavy amount as *nazarana* to Kapur Singh and Shamsheer Khan of Bahadurgarh also paid big tribute to him. Then came the turn of Faridabad, Balabagarh, Maraili and Gurgaon. He went upto the outskirts of Delhi and none had the courage to obstruct his progress.<sup>27</sup>

To the east and west of river Satluj Kapur Singh's possessions yielded an annual income of six lakh rupees.<sup>28</sup> Undoubtedly, many other Misals had wider areas under them with larger income accruing from them as compared to that of Kapur Singh but "Kapur Singh, was undoubtedly the most distinguished of the Sikh leaders before the days of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Ala Singh, of Patiala. All the Sardars of the Misals paid utmost regards to Nawab Kapur Singh and considered him as their leader."<sup>29</sup> He commanded an army of 2500

25. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix*, p. 17.

26. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

27. Prem Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-15; Cf. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269; Muhammad Latif, p. 323.

28. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-69. According to Lepel Griffin the annual income in the form of land revenue was four lakhs (*Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 57) and according to Khushwaqat Rai it was two lakh rupees (p. 69).

29. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-69; Lepel Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, p. 57; Muhammad Latif, p. 323.

horseman.<sup>30</sup> Kapur Singh's possessions included the *parganas* of Jullundur, Haibatpur, Singhpur, Patti, etc.<sup>31</sup>

The period from A.D. 1726 to 1753, in the history of the Punjab, was the most difficult time for the Sikhs. With brief periods of respite here and there the Sikhs passed through a terrible agony, always under fear of most cruel death. Kapur Singh, as leader of the Sikh movement during this period, weathered the storm very bravely and died not allowing the community to sag under the government oppression.

After Ahmad Shah Durrani's exit from the province following his first invasion of India, the Sikhs met at Amritsar on the sacred day of Baisakhi, March 29, 1748 and discussed the situation facing the Panth. At the suggestion of Nawab Kapur Singh a *gurmata* was passed that the Panth needed solidarity and union and the entire fighting body of the Sikhs was named the *Dal Khalsa jio* and placed under the supreme command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. The various groups were leagued together under twelve prominent chiefs. Each had a banner of its own. They, later on, established their principalities.

Nawab Kapur Singh died issueless at Amritsar in 1753, bequeathing the honours, which he enjoyed among the Khalsa, to the Ahluwalia Sardar.<sup>32</sup> His body was cremated near the monument raised in honour of Baba Atal.

Sardar Kapur Singh was a tall, well-built and a highly impressive man. He was a fine shot and adept in the latest contemporary art of fighting. He was sweet-tongued and possessed a winning and affable disposition.<sup>33</sup> People felt enamoured when listened him speaking. In the battle-field he was like a brave lion.<sup>34</sup> After Banda Singh's death he was the most outstanding leader that the Sikh community had. Through his indomitable capacity for organisation he was able to weld together the weakened and scattered Sikhs into a strong force to reckon with. He put the disorderly rabbles of the Sikhs into *Jathas* and channelised their energies in the proper direction. In the words of Muhammad Latif, "The *Dal* of the Khalsa or the army of the

30. Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 106; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

31. Khushwaqat Rai, p. 69; Gian Singh, p. 269.

32. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57 fn. i; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269; Muhammad Latif, p. 323; Kahan Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, Vol. I, p. 580.

33. Khushwaqat Rai, p. 69.

34. *Ibid.*; Ahmad Shah Batalia, p. 45.

theocracy of Singhs' whose foundation was laid in the times of Furrukhseer, reached the height of their power under the leadership of Kapur Singh who really organised this *Dal* or multitude of soldiers. He was undoubtedly the most distinguished of the Sikh leaders who paved the way for the greatness of the nation as an independent ruling power. His followers, who numbered thousands, gave him the title of *nawab*, as a compliment to his genius, this being almost the only instance of a Sikh assuming a Mahomedan title.<sup>35</sup> He created a strong bond of unity among the various *jathas* and gave them a sense of oneness. He did not allow the *jathedari* or leadership of a group to become hereditary. He was always for the fittest man to lead and for the others to follow.

Kapur Singh took special interest in looking after the *langar* where meals were available throughout the day and night,<sup>36</sup> and administering baptism of the double edged sword to the people and bringing them into the fold of Sikhism. He gave *pahul* to thousands of people belonging to different communities and high and low social groups.<sup>37</sup> Kapur Singh extended all possible help to Bhai Mani Singh to expound Sikhism and preach it among the people. His personal character was above reproach. In the midst of his life-long pre-occupation with war and fighting, he maintained an irreproachable ethical standard. In the words of Ahmad Shah Batalia, 'Kapur Singh was very generous and magnanimous and he was an embodiment of humility and humanity.'<sup>38</sup> One day he was bathing at a well in Faizullapur. A *mirasi* said that if he was philanthropist, he should bestow on him so much wealth that he was not able to carry it. Kapur Singh granted him that well along with its adjoining land. His slogan was that in *Gurughar* there always was *deg* for friends and *teg* for enemies.

As pointed out by Hari Ram Gupta Kapur Singh had five firsts to his credit. Firstly, he was the only Sikh to have the title of Nawab. Secondly, he was the initiator of dividing the Sikh into age groups, the *Buddha Dal* and the *Taruna Dal*. This division lasted for a long time after him. Thirdly, he was the founder of the *Dal Khalsa* in 1748. Fourthly, he was the first Sikh chief to control Lahore, the provincial capital, though only for a few days. Fifthly, he was the

35. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

36. Bute Shah, IV, p. 2 (3rd copy); Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

37. Muhammad Latif, p. 322; Kanaihya Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 106; Gian Singh, p. 268; Bute Shah, IV, pp. 1-2.

38. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix*, p. 17.

first Sardar to seize territory to the west of river Satluj after Banda Singh Bahadur.<sup>39</sup>

### Khushal Singh

Kapur Singh was succeeded by his nephew (brother's son) Khushal Singh,<sup>40</sup> who equalled his uncle in wisdom and bravery and extended his conquests on both sides of the Satluj.<sup>41</sup> His possessions included Jullundur, Narpur, Bahrapur, Bulandgarh, Haibatpur, Singhpur, Patti, Ghanoli and Bharatgarh.<sup>42</sup> Jullundur Doab and adjoining areas yielded an annual income of three lakh rupees.<sup>43</sup>

Khushal Singh had occupied the town of Jullundur by defeating its ruler Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din. He made Jullundur his headquarter and started living there.<sup>44</sup> Khushal Singh added more *ilaqas* to the territory which he had inherited from his predecessor. His associates also captured many places. He was very active against the Muslim rulers and it was one of his troopers who killed the Afghan governor of Sirhind, Zain Khan, in 1763. He seized Ludhiana and Banur with the help of Amar Singh, the ruler of Patiala, who afterwards received half of the district of Banur.<sup>45</sup> During the troubles which followed the death of Amar Singh, Sardar Khushal Singh seized the whole district. He, however, could not make much resistance to the force brought against him, and Diwan Nannu Mal was able to recover the Patiala share of the territory.<sup>46</sup>

Khushal Singh constructed a Katra at Amritsar,<sup>47</sup> which was named after his Misal. He, realised tribute from Rai Ibrahim and many other *zamindars*.<sup>48</sup> He fought in the battle against Ahmad

39. Hari Ram Gupta. *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, p. 76 (ed. 1982).

40. Bute Shah, IV, p. 2; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, I, p. 328; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57 fn. i; Muhammad Latif, p. 323; Khushwaqat Rai wrongly considers Khushal Singh to be the son of Kapur Singh (p. 69) and Gian Singh wrongly takes him to be the younger brother of Kapur Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

41. Muhammad Latif, p. 323; Cf. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57 fn. 1.

42. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57 fn. 1; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-70.

43. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

44. Bute Shah, IV, p. 5; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270; Cf. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, I, p. 111; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix*, p. 18.

45. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57 fn. 1; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

47. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix*, p. 18.

48. *Ibid.*

Shah Abdali in collaboration with other Sardars.

When Ahmad Shah Abdali made his eighth invasion of the Punjab in December 1766, Khushal Singh, accompanied by Tara Singh Gaiba with 6000 horsemen, was stationed at Taragarh to check his progress eastwards after the Durrani left Lahore. On the 15th January 1767 Ahmad Shah wrote letters to the Sardars including Khushal Singh to the effect that if they were desirous of entering his service they should come and join him, but if they had any hostile intentions, they should meet him in the field.<sup>49</sup> Khushal Singh and others spurned at Durrani's proposal of joining him and told him to meet them in the field of battle. The Sikhs gave him no rest so long as he remained in the Punjab and he returned homewards disappointed.

Most of the areas under him which had been depopulated due to the repeated incursions of the Sikhs and the Afghan invaders were once again populated under the efficient administration of Khushal Singh.<sup>50</sup> He had a big army comprising about twenty thousand horse and foot.<sup>51</sup> With this big army Khushal Singh had become irresistible and all the petty chiefs were at his mercy. He was in a position to liquidate them completely or make them his tributaries.

Khushal Singh had taken some territories of the other chiefs who were ill-disposed towards him. Diwan Nannu Mal of Patiala was induced by Hari Singh of Sialbah to make another attack upon Khushal Singh who had taken Awankot and other villages of the Sialbah territory. Their joint forces first attacked Kotla, a small fort held by Man Singh, son-in-law of the Singhpuria chief and reduced it without much difficulty. Then they besieged Awankot but Budh Singh, son of Sardar Khushal Singh, accompanied by Tara Singh Gaiba, Rai Singh Bhangi and other chiefs compelled the raising of the siege. The Patiala army reinforced by Nabha and Kaithal troops could not succeed in their attempt to get Awankot released from the Singhpurias.<sup>52</sup> Like his uncle Nawab Kapur Singh, Khushal Singh was also deeply interested in preaching Sikhism and administering baptism of the double-edged

49. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 50.

50. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

51. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 3 (3rd copy).

52. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.



sword to his followers.

Khushal Singh died in 1795.

### **Budh Singh**

Khushal Singh had two sons named Budh Singh and Sudh Singh of whom the latter died in the life time of his father.<sup>53</sup> Budh Singh succeeded to the Misal after his father's death.<sup>54</sup> Sudh Singh's only daughter was married to Lehna Singh Bhangi.<sup>55</sup> As the tradition goes Guru Arjan Dev had got manufactured bricks for the *sarovar* (tank) at Tarn Taran. The government official Nur-ud-Din carried away those bricks and used them in building his mansion. The Guru had remarked that ultimately those bricks would be used in the construction of the said *sarovar*. Budh Singh pulled down the buildings of Nur-ud-Din and used the bricks for the purpose for which these had been manufactured, and in doing so the Singhpuria Sardar spent about one lakh rupees.<sup>56</sup>

Ranjit Singh occupied most of the territories of Budh Singh in the Majha and Doaba and most of the movable property including domestic articles and fighting material lapsed to the Lahore Durbar.<sup>57</sup>

In an entry made in his book by Khushwaqat Rai in May 1811 the author writes that Ranjit Singh intended to occupy Jullundur. Therefore, Budh Singh was collecting the necessary provisions in the fort of Jullundur and the adjoining areas and trying to strengthen the same against the designs of the Lahore chief.<sup>58</sup>

In October 1811, Ranjit Singh's forces under Diwan Mohkam Chand, Fateh Singh Ahluwalia and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia marched against Sardar Budh Singh of Jullundur. The ostensible excuse for the expedition against Budh Singh was his persistent refusal to attend on Ranjit Singh with a contingent in the field. The Singhpuria chief offered no resistance but fled across the Satluj and took protection under the British. All his estates in the Trans-Satluj areas were confiscated to Lahore.<sup>59</sup> Budh Singh's possessions near Tarn Taran were

53. Ahmad Shah Batalia, p. 18; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

54. Khushwaqat Rai, p. 69; Bute Shah, IV, p. 5.

55. Ahmad Shah Batalia, p. 18.

56. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

57. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

58. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

59. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 480-81.

captured by the Maharaja's artillery officer Ghaus Khan.

Budh Singh owned the north-western corner of Ambala district on the bed of Satluj from Kiratpur to Machiwara. A portion of this territory, the *ilāqa* of Bharatgarh descended to his son Amar Singh who died in 1847. Budh Singh remained in the Cis-Satluj areas under the British asylum till his death in 1816.<sup>60</sup>

After dispossessing Budh Singh of Jullundur Doab Ranjit Singh appointed Faqir Noor-ud-Din as its administrator, who served there for four years.<sup>61</sup>

Budh Singh had seven sons, Amar Singh, being the eldest, succeeded to the estate of his father.<sup>62</sup> The Misal's territory had already been reduced considerably, and that too had been shared with his brothers by Amar Singh who gave Ghanoli to Bhupal Singh, Manoli to Gopal Singh, Banga to Lal Singh, Bela to Hardial Singh, Attalgarh to Gurdial Singh and Kambola to Dyal Singh. He retained only Bharatgarh with him. Death of Amar Singh's only son Kirpal Singh who was issueless, made him very unhappy. Amar Singh died in A.D. 1847 at Sahant Tirath near Thanesar.<sup>63</sup>

Since Amar Singh died heirless his *jagir* was divided between the Sardars of Ghanoli and Manoli and the share of the Sardari was given to Jai Singh of Manoli who was the elder brother. There arose a dispute between the brothers over the sharing of the *jagir*. A decision was taken that in case a Sardar died issueless his widow would get an amount of one thousand rupees for subsistence and half of his *jagir* and the movable property would go to the successor and the other half would be divided among the remaining brothers. This practice continued for a long time in their family.

After Jai Singh's death in 1877 his blind son Avtar Singh became his successor. The family enjoyed a big *jagir* worth about seventy five thousand rupees annually under the British.<sup>64</sup>

60. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, p. 270 (ed. 1970).

61. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *Appendix*, p. 18.

62. Bute Shah, IV, p. 5 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

63. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

## The Roots of Nationalism in Punjab 1858-1900

DR S. C. MITTAL\*

Punjab was the last province of India which was annexed by the British. The people of Punjab looked the British administration with distrust and suspicion. From the very beginning the British Government adopted a policy of coercion and repression and tried to establish the rule with a strong hand.

In the name of social, material and mental improvement, Punjab had soon become a field for the Church missionaries. As early as in 1834, the Ludhiana Mission was founded by John C. Lowrie of the American Presbyterian Mission.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this was the first church Mission established in Punjab and marked the beginning of missionary activities in this province.

Social activity especially of schools and hospital, propagation through lectures and literature were looked by the people of Punjab with suspicion. In December 1849 an English school was opened by the efforts of G.W. Forman, a member of the American Presbyterian Mission.<sup>2</sup> Schools were also opened in Amritsar in 1853 and in Ambala in 1854.<sup>3</sup> Even John Lawrence proved himself a stout patron of Christian Missions and contributed towards this a sum of rupees five hundred annually over his own pocket.<sup>4</sup> State Churches in the Punjab date from 1854. Official arrangement were made and the handsome Gothic Churches were built on every station of the Punjab.<sup>5</sup> Some of the most notable personalities of Punjab including child Maharaja Dalip Singh were converted to Christianity and started donating rupees 5,000 annually to mission school which was started in 1853.<sup>6</sup> Aya Singh, Attar Singh, Sadhu Singh and Santokh Singh, the

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1. C. H. Loehlin, 'The History of Christianity in the Punjab,' *The Panjab Past and Present* (hereafter referred as *PPP*), Vol. VII, pt. I (April 1973), p. 180.
2. *Lahore District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 62.
3. H. R. Mehta, *History of Western Education in the Punjab*, p. 15.
4. Fauja Singh, *A Brief Account of the Freedom Movement in the Punjab*, p. 3.
5. S. S. Thorburn, *The Punjab in Peace and War* (Reprint Patiala, 1970), p. 186.
6. Harbans Singh, 'Origins of the Singh Sabha,' *PPP*, Vol. VII (April 1973), p. 28.

students of Amritsar Mission school embraced Christianity. Similarly Shardha Ram, a staunch convert of Phillaur, delivered a series of lectures advocating Christianity. In Amritsar the Church Mission Society and the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society were the main instrument behind the mass conversion in Amritsar.<sup>7</sup>

Within twenty years, the hectic activity of the missionary alarmed the mind of the people of the Punjab and that they started thinking that some measures should be taken to meet this danger. By 1881 the Christian number amounted to 33699<sup>8</sup> and in 1901, its number went to 71854.

The first movement that accelerated the growth of public consciousness was the Namdhari Movement. The Namdhari or Kuka sect<sup>9</sup> was founded by Baba Ram Singh on 13th April 1857—just before the revolt at Bhaini in Ludhiana District. Originally the movement had two-fold objects—socio-religious and political. It aimed at the reforming the Sikh religion who form only 6% of the population of Punjab in 1881 and 8.63% in 1901 and removal of social evils. Secondly it was to disrupt the British administration and to re-establish the Sikh Raj in the Punjab. One of the significant aspects was the hoisting of the white flag at the inaugural ceremony.<sup>10</sup>

Baba Ram Singh left his service from the Khalsa army in 1845. After the annexation, his mind agitated against the activities of the Christian Missionaries and the setting up slaughter houses for the supply of beef, etc. The Movement soon directed towards inculcating a strict morality among the Sikhs and restoring the Sikh religion to its original purity. He laid down a strict code of discipline for the members of his organisations which was also termed as the Sant Khalsa. Social evils like female infanticide, child marriage were prohibited for

7. Mrs. Anand Gauba, 'Socio-Religious Societies and Social Changes in the City of Amritsar under British Rule, *Punjab History Conference* (hereafter is referred as *PHC*), Vol. XII (March 1978), p. 165.
8. *Punjab Census Report, 1881*, table No. 3, pp. 3-4.
9. For detail study of the Movement see : *Ludhiana District Gazetteer, 1904, Kuka Papers* (PSAP) ; Fauja Singh, *A Brief Account of Freedom Movement in the Punjab*; S. S. Senahi's articles in *PHC*, Vol. X and XV.
10. For detail see, Swaran Singh Sanehi's articles 'Kuka's in relation to the Sikh Rule,' *PHC*, Vol. XV (March 1981), pp. 208-23 and 'Contradiction in the British Records on the Kuka's History, *PHC*, Vol. X (Feb. 1976), pp. 181-89.

its members. The members were asked to recite *Chandi de War* and participate in *hawan*.

As regards its political aspect, the Kukas never recognised the British rule and established their parallel government. Baba Ram Singh appointed *Subas* (Governor) to collect the funds for the organisation. He organised his own para-military. He established *panchayats* to meet out the disputes of its members and to avoid official codes. Local *pathshalas* for the study of children were opened at various places. The organisations adopted their own *sawars* for purpose of communication and avoided the official-postal arrangement.<sup>11</sup>

As regards the organisation and the nature of the Kuka movement, it would be wrong to claim that the new leadership in Punjab emerged from the lower middle classes.<sup>12</sup> Infact most of the prominent Kuka leaders comprised of those politically awakened ex-Sikh soldiers, who had been provoked by the anti-Sikh policy of the British rulers. Even among some of them served in the Khalsa rule, while the close relatives had been in the employment of the same, and some others who had been in the services of the British Government itself had turned against the British during or after the great-event of 1857.<sup>13</sup>

As regards its numerical strength it is difficult to give correct estimate. While captain Menzies reported their numbers upto 40,000 in 1863, Major Perkins estimated their number 60,000 in September 1863. To Rana Jang-Bahadur of Nepal the Kukas in Punjab were not less than 300,000 in 1871. Even during Baba Ram Singh's first visit at the fair of *Hola* at Anandpur in 1867 their number exaggeratedly estimated. For example to Fuzul Hussain, Deputy Inspector, their number were 8000, while Mr. McAndrew found about 5000, while to others their number were more than 22000 Kukas at the fair.

However, there is no denying the fact that the Kuka movement soon got momentum under the moving leadership of Baba Ram Singh. He toured widely in the Punjab. By 1863 he had been able to build up a sizable following running into several thousands. The British government imposed several restrictions on him and his followers.

11. Fauja Singh, *A Brief Account of the Freedom Movement in the Punjab*, p. 9.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

13. Swaran Singh Sanehi, 'Kuka in Relation to the Sikh Rule,' *PHC*, Vol. XV (March 1981), p. 210.

He was not allowed to move out of his village. Infact restrictive measures proved a cause of more popularity and general awareness among the masses. Consequently the government realized its mistakes and removed such restrictions in 1867. Again in 1869 the Kuka movement became the eye-sore of the British authorities. In 1871 the Kukas killed some butchers at Amritsar, Raikot, Malout and Malerkotla. The Government took serious steps. Nearly 59 Kukas had been blown away at Malerkotla by Mr. Cowan, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana, on 18 January 1872. It is said that each Kuka came himself before the canon mouth turn by turn and face the shots. Ind Kaur and Khem Kaur, the two ladies, who were handed over to Patiala authorities but were released later on. Bishan Singh, a boy of twelve, jumped upon Mr. Cowan on some abusive remarks and caught hold of his beard. Mr. Cowan himself admitted in a letter to Mr. Forsyth, the Commissioner, and said, "but one man escaped from the guards and made a furious attack on me seizing me by the beard and endeavouring to strangle me, and as he was a very powerful man. I had considerable difficulty in releasing myself."<sup>14</sup> The other sixteen Kukas were also blown at Kotla by Mr. Forsyth to terrorise the public. On the same day Baba Ram Singh deported to Burma where he died in 1885.

The British authorities suppressed the movement violently. Arrests were made and most of the *subas* were banished. Some futile attempts were also made to make contacts with Nepal and Kashmir States. Efforts had been made to establish a Kuka regiment in the service of the Maharaja of Kashmir. In 1871 some Kukas had been sent to Nepal.<sup>15</sup>

After 1872 some attempts were also made to establish contacts with the Russian authorities. Suba Gurcharan Singh of Chak Ram Das in Sialkot District visited Kabul and Russia many times and tried to seek the political help in getting rid of the British Rule.

Though the Kuka Movement failed due to several factors such as liberal employment of Sikhs in the Army. Support of the Sikh literate elite and landed aristocracy to the British and the vigilance

14. For detail see S. S. Sanhi, Contradiction in the British Records on the Kukas History, *PHC*, Vol. X (Feb. 1976), p. 188.

15. Memorandum by McAndrew, Inspector General of Police, Punjab Ambala Circle, dated Nov. 20, 1871, wide *Kuka Papers* (PSAP).

of the government. But the movement left an significant impact on the continuous struggle for freedom. The echo of the Kuka Martyrs became a legend and a source of inspiration for the revolutionaries to come.

When the Kuka Movement began to decline another Sikh Movement known as the Singh Sabha Movement was started in July 1873. It was a socio-religious, less political, movement started by the more enlightened part of the Sikh community. Its object was to safeguards the Sikh interests at the time of propaganda of Christian missionaries and the increasing influence of Brahmanical Hinduism. Thakur Singh Sandanwalia and Giani Gian Singh were appointed as the first President and Secretary of this Sabha.<sup>16</sup> Earlier it was dominated by *Rajas*, *Mahants* and priests. Most of the members of the Amritsar Singh Sabha belonged to the rich and aristocratic families of Sikhs.<sup>17</sup>

Consequently it could not gain sound footing among the rural Sikh masses of the Punjab. Later on 2 November 1879 the Singh Sabha of Lahore was established under the leadership of Dewan Buta Singh and Bhai Gurumukh Singh, a professor in Oriental College at Lahore, as President and Secretary respectively. In 1886 the Khalsa Dewan split up in to two sections known as the Lahore and Amritsar Singh Sabha. The main reasons of split were the internal wranglings, and dissensions among the leaders, and in 1885 expulsion of Baba Nihal Singh, the writer of a book entitled *Khursid-i-Khalsa*. In this book the writer criticised the British Government in connection with the annexation of Punjab and supported the claims of Maharaja Duleep Singh over lost his kingdom.<sup>18</sup>

The Lahore group under the leadership of Bhai Gurumukh Singh and Bhai Jowahir Singh of the North-Western Railways Managing Office, attracted the support of the majority of the Singh Sabha's of the province as well as comprised many its members, the younger, the better educated and more professional members of the Sikh community. Soon its branches were opened at Rawalpindi, Peshawar,

16. Ashok, Shamsher Singh, *Punjab Dian Lehran (1850-1910)*, p. 164.

17. Gurdarshan Singh, 'Origin and Development of the Singh Sabha Movement : Constitutional Aspects', *PPP*, Vol: VII, part-I, April 1973, p. 47.

18. Ashok, Shamsher Singh, *Singh Sabha Lahir ka Sanchalak* : Prof. Bhai Gurumukh Singh, *Singh Sabha Patrika*, June 1974, pp. 28-29.

Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ambala, Patiala, Simla, Multan, Jind, Gujranwala, etc.<sup>19</sup> Infact the Lahore Dewan was regarded as the real Sikh representative body as it presented several addresses to various Viceroys and high British officials on behalf of the whole Sikh community.<sup>20</sup> While the Amritsar Khalsa Dewan was left only with the three Sabhas of Amritsar, Faridkot and Rawalpindi so from 1886 upto the establishment of the Chief Khalsa Dewan in 1902, both the Khalsa Dewans worked as separate organisations.

However, the Singh Sabhas played a significant role in the sphere of social reforms in Sikh society. The Lahore Party did a tremendous work in eradicating the evils of caste system, untouchability, the *pardah* system, female infanticide, dowry system and child-marriage. To encourage social equality and intercaste marriages the *Sikh satsaung* was started in 1892. To check the conversion of low caste Sikhs, the Shudhi Sabha was also established by Teja Singh on 17 April 1893.<sup>21</sup> Later with the efforts of Bhagat Lakshman Singh and Mehar Singh the Khalsa Sudhar Sabha at Lahore was founded to check the activities of Arya Samaj.<sup>22</sup> Efforts were also made to minimise the influence of Brahmnical dominance. In early 20th century with the efforts of the Singh Sabha the Anand Marriage act was passed.<sup>23</sup>

A serious effort had been made in the sphere of educational and literary activities. Officially in 1881 census the Sikhs were claimed as the 'most uneducated class in the Punjab.'<sup>24</sup> The Khalsa schools were opened at Amritsar and Lahore in 1879 and 1880 respectively. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of the Singh Sabha was the establishment of Khalsa College. Its foundation stone was laid by Sir James Lyall, the Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab on March 5, 1892. It was possible with the help of the government and the Sikh state.<sup>25</sup> It

19. Ashok, Shamsher Singh, *Punjab Diyan Leharan (1850-1910)*, p. 64.

20. D. Patrie, *Secret Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1911*, PPP, Vol. IV, Part-II, (Oct. 1970), p. 311.

21. Harbans Singh, 'Singh Sabha Lahar Samya Ki Mang' in *Singh Sabha Pairika*, July 1975, p. 10.

22. Lakshman Singh, *Autobiography*, p. 163.

23. K. S. Talwar, 'The Anand Marriage Act,' PPP, Vol. II, Part-II (Oct. 1968), p. 400.

24. See *The Punjab Census*, 1881.

25. Teja Singh, *Khalsa College Amritsar*, PPP, Vol. VII, Part-I (April 1973), p. 76.



soon became the centre of Sikh social, educational and cultural activities. Similarly for the education of girls, the Sikh Kanya Pathshala was opened at Ferozepore in 1892, which was soon converted in Mahavidyalaya. A number of girls schools were also started at various places. Much progress had been made in early twentieth century when an annual feature of Sikh Education Conference started.

In the sphere of literature efforts had been made to propagate the Gurumukhi language. It is estimated that upto the end of 19th century out of 21,30,989 Sikhs, 88,558 were put down as knowing Gurumukhi.<sup>26</sup> Some efforts were also made to establish Gurumukhi schools. *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, was also started in 1899.

To sum up it can be said that Singh Sabha Movement produced general awakening among the Sikhs. It brought about social and religious improvements and opened the gate of educational facilities for the Sikhs. In a way it prepared the way for the rise of the Akalis. It utilized some sort of defence mechanism and identification. It created general awareness among the Sikh masses as well as bitterness with other communities. Its appeal was mainly concerned as its earlier stage, to the upper and the intelligentsia.

Among the Hindus those who consisted 38.2% of the population in 1881 or 41% of the population in 1901 in Punjab and Haryana, the most significant reform movements were the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Dev Samaj and the Sanatan Dharam Sabha. The Brahmo Samaj was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy on August 1828.<sup>27</sup> Its appearance in Punjab may be seen with the visits of the prominent Bengali Brahmo Samaj leaders like Devendra Nath Tagore (1858), Keshav Chandra Sen (1866-67) and Surendra Nath Banerjee (1877 and 1882). Devendra Nath Tagore toured Delhi, Amritsar and Simla.<sup>28</sup> The Bengali Babus who were generally in the services at government offices, schools and dispensaries played a significant role in propagating the ideas of Brahmo Samaj.<sup>29</sup> The prominent among them were Babu Protul Chandra Chatterji, Kali Prasanna Roy,

26. Gurunam Singh Rakhi, *Sir Sunder Singh Majithia* (Unpublished Dissertation, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1974, p. 38.

27. S. N. Shastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, Vol. I, p. 39.

28. R. K. Shobaana, *Dayal Singh Majithia (1849-98)*, Unpublished thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975, p. 26.

29. K. W. Jones, *Arya Dharam or Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab*, p. 14.

Jogindra Chandra Bose, members of the Lahore Bar and Navin Chandra Rai, the registrar of the Punjab University. Other notable leaders were Pandit Shiv Narain Agnithotri, Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia, the founder of the *The Tribune* and Lala Ruchi Ram Sahani.

Though Devendra Nath Tagore visited Punjab in 1856, yet the first Brahmo Samaj was established in 1863 with the efforts of a small group of Bengalis.<sup>30</sup> After the visit of Keshev Chandra Sen at Delhi, Lahore and Amritsar in 1866-67, a number of branches were established in Rawalpindi (1867), Amritsar (1873), Multan (1875) and some other places.<sup>31</sup> However, it attracted only the educated Hindus of the Punjab.

Originally a religious movement<sup>32</sup> but in Punjab it stood mainly for the literary and educational progress and the social reforms. The Brahmo Samaj made efforts to eradicate the evils of the rigidity of the caste system and child marriage.<sup>33</sup> They preached female education, widow remarriage and helped to simplify the rituals and ceremonies of marriages.

As regards religion it was an effect as the reform of Hinduism from within. It proved a double barrel gun to check the Christianity as well as Orthodox Hinduism. It preached Monotheism of God, rejected idol worship. Under the dynamic leadership of Devendra Nath Tagore it became a strong defender of Hindu Dharma. Keshev Chandra gave it a radical shape.

So it can be said that the Brahmo Samaj may be called the forerunner of the social reform movements among the Hindus. It became an important influence in the Punjab.<sup>34</sup> It prepared the socio-religious change of the Hindus. It also projected religion as a universe force and helped in challenging national outlook. However, its appeal was very limited. Infact it was the intellectual's rather everyman's so the western challenge.<sup>35</sup>

The other Hindu movements, the Arya Samaj was revivalist in form and reformist in content.<sup>36</sup> Originally launched in 1875 by Swami

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

32. J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movement in India*, p. 25.

33. B. S. Saini, *The Social and Economic History of the Punjab including Haryana and Himachal Pradesh 1901-1939* (Delhi, 1975), p. 90.

34. Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of India*, 3rd edition, p. 731.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 730.

36. P. Karunakaran, *Religious and Political Awakening in India* (Meerut, 1965), p. 2.

Dayanand Saraswati, it became popular among the Hindus,<sup>37</sup> particularly young men.<sup>38</sup> Officially it was a Hindu Reformed Church representing the reaction of Hinduism against the Christian Religion, western Science and western domination.<sup>39</sup> In fact it was a combination of an attempt to purify Hindu Society by removing evils and preaching philosophy of *Karma* and to revivify it by incorporating what was worth from the west.<sup>40</sup>

Swami Dayanand got a fertile land for his ideology not at his birth place at Tankara (Now in Gujrat State) but in the towns of Punjab. The first Samaj in Punjab was established at Lahore on 24 June 1877. Swami Dayanand himself toured at some of the important places of Punjab.<sup>41</sup> He himself founded nearly eleven Arya Samajs during his visits.<sup>42</sup> In his speeches he attacked idolatory, child marriage and propagated the re-marriages of widows and the female education. While he praised *Vedas* as a source of eternal knowledge, he vehemently criticised christianity and the activities of their missionaries. He also preached that the *Vedas* inculcated Monothism and attacked Hinduism which is based upon the *Puranas*. He accepted *Shastras* as the main tool of proselytization.

After the death of Swami Dayanand on 30th October 1883 it became an important influential movement in the Punjab.<sup>43</sup> In 1886 the number of Samaj arose to thirty one in twenty three districts. Again in 1890 its number increased to 55.<sup>44</sup> Some of the prominent earlier leaders of the Samaj were Pandit Gurudutt, Lala Munshi Ram, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Lekh Ram, Lala Sian Das, Lala Hans Raj, Pandit Basti Ram, Lala Chandu Lal, Doctor Ramji Das and Rao Yudhister. Most of the Arya Samajs in Haryana were established

37. Ramsay MacDonald, *The Government of India* (London, 1919), p. 236; K. T. Paul, *The British Connections with India* (London, 1927), p. 46; Valentine Chirol, *India* (London, 1926), p. 95; S. R. Sharma, 'The Arya Samaj and its impact on India in the 19th century,' *Ideas in History* (ed. by Bisheshar Prasad), p. 157.

38. *Punjab Census Report*, 1901, p. 116.

39. *Home Department (Political-B), Government of India Proceedings*, July 1911, Nos. 55-58.

40. Percival Spear, *India—A Modern History* (Ann Arbor, 1961), p. 293.

41. R. C. Jawad, *Punjab Ka Arya Samaj*, p. 1.

42. Kenneth W. Jones, 'The Arya Samaj in British India 1875-1947,' vide *Religion in Modern India* by Robert D. Baird (Delhi, Manohar, 1981), p. 29.

43. Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of India*, 3rd ed., p. 731.

44. K. W. Jones, *Arya Dharam*, p. 155.

in 1890's.

Perhaps in Punjab the expansion of Arya Samaj was more on sound footing than else where. Here, Hinduism and its caste system was less rigid in comparison to other parts of the country.<sup>45</sup> The Brahmans were unable to dominate large powerful groups like the Jats.<sup>46</sup> Besides the religious activities, it centred its programme in eradicating of social evils and helping the poors and propagating the educational activities. It denounced caste rigidity and advocated the freedom of movement from one caste to another based on *Gun* (Virtue), *Karam* (Action) and *Swadhaya* (Self study).<sup>47</sup> It made efforts to raise the status of the untouchables and the social uplift of the lower and oppressed classes. In 1884 it launched a *shuddhi* (purification) movement to prevent low caste Hindus from converting to Christianity or Islam and to bring them in their original religion, i.e., Hinduism. The Arya Samaj launched a fiery crusade against infant marriage and supported to consent Bill of 1891 and advocated widow marriage, organised orphans and widow homes.<sup>48</sup>

Besides the religious and social sphere in education a significant contribution was made by the Arya Samaj. The D.A.V. High School was established on 1 June 1886 under the headmastership of Lala Hans Raj,<sup>49</sup> which raised up to degree classes in 1894. It gave incentives to open other schools through out the province. Similarly schools for girls were established at various places. The Arya Kanya Pathshala was opened in 1890 which soon raised into Kanya Mahavidyalaya on 14 June 1896. Similarly in early 20th century, a network of Gurukul system attracted the people of Punjab.

Unlike education, it was the national activities which upset the British Government. In 1900 Congress session at Lahore for the first time nearly over one hundred Aryas attended the session and several of them made speeches. To the British Government the Arya Samaj was the 'greatest enemy of the Government' and the 'most

45. L.S.S. O'malley (Ed.), *Modern India and the West*, p. 372.

46. Prem Chand, *The Social Reform Movements in the Punjab, 1873-1900* (unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Kurukshetra University, 1978), p. 53.

47. V. P. Uppadhyaya, *The Origin, Scope and Mission of the Arya Samaj* (Allahabad, 1954), p. 9.

48. Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj*, p. 125.

49. *The Tribune*, 5.6.1886.

dangerous Anti-British Movement.<sup>50</sup> According to the official view, the Arya Samaj was mainly responsible for sedition. In 1907 Sir Denzil Ibbetson, the Lt. Governor of Punjab stated that he had been informed by nearly every District Magistrate of Punjab that wherever there was Arya Samaj, it was the centre of seditious talk.<sup>51</sup> Later Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lt. Governor of Punjab, also expressed the similar views.<sup>52</sup>

In short it can be said that the Arya Samaj was both social and national movement. Social and educational activities of the Arya Samaj created the general awakening and opened a way for the modernization. It encouraged the readings of the *Vedas* and attacked *Puranas* and orthodox Hinduism. It created a feeling of self-reliance, faith and patriotism among the youth and in a way it had a big impact on the Punjabi mind and prepared the ground for nationalism.

Like the Arya Samaj the another society of note was Sanatan Dharam Sabha which was founded at Jhajjar (District Rohtak) in 1886 by Pandit Deendayalu Sharma.<sup>53</sup> Its chief objects<sup>54</sup> were the reformation and preaching of the Sanatan Dharma, the eradication of the prevailing social evils, the encouragement of the Sanskrit and Hindi languages, the opening of the educational institutions and inculcating an urge for social service. Its basic aspects were the respect for God and Godliness and faith in the theory of incarnation.

It became popular in the Haryana region and its branches were opened at Bhiwani, Hissar, Sirsa, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Safidon, Rewari, Palwal, Kaithal, Rohtak, Beri and Gurgaon, etc. Some of its notable leaders were Nathulal, Pandit Chander Bhan, Pandit Harbans Lal Sharma of Jhajjar, Lala Sohn Lal and Hargo Lal Sharma of Hissar. Similarly some other prominent leaders were Lala Ganda Ram of Ambala Cantt, Pandit Harihar Sarup Sharma, Pandit Mauli Chandra Sharma, son of Pandit Deendayalu Sharma, Goswami Ganesh Dutt and Pandit Neki Ram Sharma of Bhiwani.

Its central body Bharat Dharam Mahamandal was founded at

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50. Home Department (Political Deposit), Government of India, Proceedings, April 1912, No 4.

51. Home Department (Political-A), Government of India, August 1907, Nos. 148-235: *The Punjabee*, 22.6.1907 ; 21.6.1907 and 16.10.1909.

52. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I knew it* (1885-1925), (London, 1925), p. 184.

53. Pandit Deendayalu Sharma, *Shatabadhi Granth*, p. 24.

54. *Punjab Census Report*, 1901, p. 115.

Haridwar. In its inaugural session some prominent religious leaders like Colonel Alcot of Theosophical Society, Raja Harbans Lal of Sheikhpura, Dewan Ramjus of Kapurthala, Balmukund Gupta and Pandit A. D. Vyas delivered lectures.<sup>55</sup> Its sessions were held at Haridwar, Mathura and Lahore.

The Sanatan Dharma Sabha made valuable contribution in the sphere of education and literary awakening. A number of colleges were established at Delhi, Lahore, Calcutta and Bombay. It also encouraged the establishment of the libraries and reading rooms. In social sphere it attacked the use of tobacco and liquor, the child marriage, the extravagance on litigation. It also opposed the child dancing of the prostitutes at marriages. They also advocated widow re-marriage and removal of the untouchability. Infact, though in lesser extent, it helped in the reconstruction of the Hindu society in Punjab.

Another reform movement among the Hindus was the Dev Samaj (Ideal Society). It was founded by Pandit Shiv Narain Agnihotri on 16 February 1887. Its chief objects<sup>56</sup> were the propagation of truth and purity among all classes, eradicating of vanity, hatred, selfishness and advocating to observe beneficial ceremonies and rites and attacked superstitions. Its attack on the social evils like caste distinction, *pardah* system, extravagant expenses on the occasion of marriages and deaths and preached for widow re-marriages. It discouraged the use of alchohal, cigarette, non-vegetarian diet, etc.<sup>57</sup> It also encouraged the women's education. A Dev Samaj school was opened at Moga in 1899 for the education of boys and girls. Later in 1901<sup>58</sup> Dev Samaj Girls High School Ferozepur was started. However, the Movement attracted a very small number of the educated class and consequently held a very limited impact on the Hindu society.

One of the movements which presented a serious challenge to the British authority<sup>59</sup> was the Wahabi Movement. Originally started

55. Pandit Deendayalu Sharma *Sankshipt Jeewan Charit*, p. 5.

56. Dharambir, The article, *Dev Samaj in Punjab 1849-1960* (Ed. by Ganda Singh), p. 184.

57. *Punjab Census Reports, 1901*, p. 116.

58. S. P. Kanai, 'The Dev Samaj,' *PPP*, Vol. VII, pt. I (April 1973), p. 237.

59. Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. II (Delhi 1967), pp. 61-62.

in Arabia by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab<sup>60</sup> (1707-1787) got its inspiration from Imam Ibn Taimiya of the Hanbali, a school of Muslim theology. The Movement was 'primarily a religious'<sup>61</sup> or puritan Islamic.<sup>62</sup> Infact, it was a Muslim revivalist movement.

In India the leader of the movement was Syed Ahmad (1786-1831) of Raebarailly, a district of North-Western Province (now U.P.). He started to bring revival in Muslim community by means of a three fold activities, 'the exaltation of the world of God, the revival of the spirit of faith in word indeed and the preach of Holy War.'<sup>63</sup> He toured a number of North-Western towns and cities where his activities were highly admired. Before starting the *Jehad* or Holy War he made a journey to Mecca in 1822. After his return in 1824 he founded a system by which they (his followers) affected one of the greatest revivals known to Indian History and which had kept alive the spirit of revolt against the British rule during 50 years.<sup>64</sup>

Syed Ahmad designed himself *Imam Mahadi*, *Amir-ul-Musliman* and *Khalifa*. The North-West Frontier was selected as the base of operation. He raised a strong group of fighters. A number of pamphlets were written. Military training was given to its volunteers. In its social and economic fields he helped the poor peasants to resist tyranny and oppression.

The Wahabis in India launched a movement for the overthrow of the Sikh Kingdom in Punjab and the British from India. Syed Ahmad established himself in the Swat Valley where he waged a *Jehad* against the Sikhs. But in the pitched battle of Balakot (a village in the Kunhas pass) in 1831 and he lost his life.<sup>65</sup> Syed Ahmad's sudden death did not subside the enthusiasm. Infact he had already created a well knit organisation from Dacca to Peshawar,<sup>66</sup> and

60. L.S.S.O'Malley (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 396; R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1971), p. 117.

61. A. J. Allen and others, *The Cambridge Shorter History of India* (Delhi, 1958), p. 717.

62. J. C. Powell Price, *A History of India* (New York, 1958), p. 545; Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 395.

63. Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 23.

64. W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, 3rd edition (Calcutta, 1876), pp. 61-62; Q. Ahmad, *The Wahabi Movement in India* (Calcutta, 1966), p. 18.

65. *The Oxford History of India* (Oxford, 1958), p. 802; Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 26; Q. Ahmad, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-98.

66. Selections from the *Records of the Government of Bengal Papers*, No. XLII, pp. 72, 103, 130, 132, 134. Quoted by S. B. Choudhry, *Civil Disturbances during the British Rule in India* (1765-1857), Calcutta, 1955, p. 57.

established his centres in all the important towns of the country. The headquarters of the movement was Patna.<sup>67</sup> Agents were appointed for the collection of funds and for the recruitment of volunteers.

The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the first Anglo-Sikh war (1845-46) made the British paramount in the Punjab. Now the movement soon assumed a political and military character against the British. The British also started operation against them through the special police deputations and by the armed expeditions on the Frontier. Between 1850 and 1863 nearly 20 expeditions were sent in which 60,000 troops participated against the Wahabis.<sup>68</sup> When the military operations failed, the campaign of Police action, followed by judicial prosecution, was speeded up.<sup>69</sup>

During the state trials a number of centres for the efficient working of the anti-British movement came to notice.<sup>70</sup> Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner of the Punjab, reported that the Muslims of Patna and Thanesar were in correspondence with the 64th Native Infantry near Peshawar and revolted.<sup>71</sup> Cis Satluj area of Punjab was one of the main centres of its activities. Some of the disgruntled Muslim Zamindars joined it.<sup>72</sup> Besides Delhi, some of its important centres were Thanesar, Panipat, Ambala and Peshawar.

Some of the notable leaders were Maulvi Mohammad Qasim of Panipat, Husain of Thanesar, Mohammad Jafar of Thanesar and Mohammad Shafi of Ambala. Thanesar was described by the British as "one of the main Depots"<sup>73</sup> and Jafar as "one of the chief organisers." With the arrest of Jafar the movement virtually met its doom. After 1864,<sup>74</sup> it was completely suppressed in India by 1888.

Though the movement failed, it left its impact. Probably this was the first planned and highly organised revolutionary movement after

67. Briton Martin, *New India 1885* (Oxford, 1970), p. 160.

68. R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. I, p. 251.

69. Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 28.

70. For details see Mohamad Husain and others, *A History of Freedom Movement*, Vol. II (Delhi, 1984), pp. 366-389.

71. Salahuddin Malik, 'The Punjab and the Indian Mutiny, *Journal of the Indian History*, Vol. L, pt. 2 (Aug. 1972), p. 346.

72. S. A. A. Rizvi, 'Ideological Background of Wahabi Movement in India in the 18th and 19th century', *Ideas in History* (ed. by Bisheshar Prasad) (Delhi, 1963), pp. 93-109.

73. W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

74. B. K. Muzfar, *Kurukshetra Political and Cultural History*, p. 97.



the uprising of 1857.<sup>75</sup> But being a purely Muslim movement for the revival of their community and for establishing the Muslim rule in India against the English as well as 'other infidels', it could not be appreciated by other communities. Infact it gave an impetus to separatist tendencies in Indian society and widened the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, this movement gave turn to the politics tended to be dominated by religion dogmas.<sup>77</sup> It also kept alive the desire for freedom among the Muslims.<sup>78</sup>

After the failure of the Wahabi Movement, the Muslims saw their future bright in the hands of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) of Delhi, the founder of the Aligarh Movement. His synthic mind sought to reconcile the spirit of Islam with that of the modern west,<sup>79</sup> both politically and culturally.<sup>80</sup> He encouraged the Muslims for the active loyalty towards the British regime.

One of the greatest achievements of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the foundation of the Anglo-Arabic College at Aligarh in 1875, which later 1920 became the Aligarh Muslim University. Its object was to make the Muslims progressive and better equipped to face the struggle for existence.<sup>81</sup> He encouraged the Muslim community towards the religious and social awakening. He interpreted Quran and Islam on the basis of reason to meet modern needs and problems.<sup>82</sup> He raised more stress on the study of science and western education. His Muslim modernist appeal did not find favour among the isolationist conservative section of the Muslims.<sup>83</sup> Infact he gave Indian Islam a sense of separate existence.<sup>84</sup>

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's views prepared a group of co-thinkers who came to be known collectively as the Aligarh School. Some of notables were Maulvi Nazir Ahmad and Maulvi Zaka-Ullah of Delhi College ; Altaf Hussain, Hali and Maulvi Shibi Numani, the poets ;

75. R. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 251-52.

76. Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 30.

77. *Ibid.*

78. *Ibid.*

79. *The Oxford History of India* (Third ed.), p. 732.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 803.

81. M.S. Jain, *The Aligarh Movement*, p. 49.

82. *The Oxford History of India*, 3rd ed., p. 804.

83. William Graham, *English Political Philosophy*, p. 202.

84. *The Oxford History of India*, 3rd ed., p. 806.

Khuda Bakash, the scholar; and Yusuf Ali, the educationist.<sup>85</sup> In Punjab the Muslims (52.4% of the population of 1881) were also attracted with the inclusion of new ideas of Sir Syed Ahmad and others.

During 1860's a net work of reform societies were also started, though most of the leaders belong to the aristocratic classes who had less acquiescence with the western education. One of the prominent societies was the Lahore Anjuman-i-Islamia founded in 1869. Its chief object was to protect the Muslims religious endowments but later when Barkat Ali, a retired Government servant and follower of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, became Secretary in 1877, it became a reform society.<sup>86</sup> Soon a number of its branches and educational schools were opened by the society. It also started a paper known as the *Risalah-Anjuman-Islamia Punjab*. Similarly another more popular society known as the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam (Society for support of Islam) was started. It belonged to the English Education Muslims people like Muhammad Shafi and Shaha Din. It preached the study of English, emphasised female education and advocated the reform ideas of Syed Ahmad.

In short it can be said that the Aligarh Movement created among the Muslims a sense of religious identity and helped them to face the new challenges of late nineteenth century. To some extent it can be said that Syed Ahmad Khan roused the Muslims by providing an ideological link with the west, much as Ram Mohan Roy for the Hindus.<sup>87</sup> Society like Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam not only brought cultural and religious awakening but in the early of the twentieth century it proved the nucleus of the political activities.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly, the Ahmadiya Sect (True Islam) had played a definite and dynamic<sup>89</sup> role in the Punjab. It was founded in 1888 at Qadian, a town in Gurdaspur, by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1838-1908).<sup>90</sup> Its chief aim was to propagate Islam, eradication of evil habits and

85. *Ibid.*, p. 804.

86. J. R. Edward Churchil, *Muslim Societies of the Punjab 1860-1890*, PPP, Vol. VIII, pt. I (April, 1974), p. 77.

87. Percival Spear, *India, A Modern History*, p. 287.

88. S. C. Mittal, *Freedom Movement in Punjab*, p. 37.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

90. For detail see Stephen Funchs, *Rebellious Prophets*, p. 198.

customs and to appreciate the good work of the British Government.<sup>91</sup> It tried to meet the challenge of the Christian missionaries and the influence of the Arya Samaj. It also started a number of schools, journals, periodicals and tracts.

The Movement may be called a mid-way approach between orthodoxy and the extreme rationalism of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, of the irresistible interest of the western education and the provoked attacks of the Christian missionaries on one hand and unconditional outburst of loyalty towards the British Government. It was liberal in ideas but conservative in its approach. It preached social reform in theory but enforced certain evils<sup>92</sup> like *pardah* and polygamy in practice. However the Ahmadiya Sect soon came into conflict due to its founders frequent issuing proclamations and prophecies and high claims. It had also embittered its co-religionist, the Christian missionaries, the Arya Samajist and even with the Sikhs, while it identified Guru Nanak with Muslims.

It gained much publicity but less results. It had only 1113 Ahmadiya followers, males over fifteen upto 1901.<sup>93</sup> It helped in fostering communal tensions, hatred and riots in the Punjab.<sup>94</sup>

Though the above socio-religious movement in the Punjab were less behind nearly fifty years as compare to Bengal, they presented a curious mixture of old and new, of tradition and modernity, of nationalism and sectarianism or communalism. The Punjab people neither wholly adapted the west nor totally neglected or rejected its traditional past. Contrary to the expectations of the earlier administrations, the leadership could not come from the old governing class.<sup>95</sup> Like other provinces these movements were the product of small emerging new middle class which was creative and dynamic.

These movements provided an opportunity for the development in the sphere of society, education and culture. They checked the activities of the Christian missionaries as well as tried to haul the

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91. A. R. Dard, *Life of Ahmad*, pt. I (Lahore, 1949), pp. 271-72.

92. W.C. Smith, 'The Ahmadiyah Movement,' *PPP*, Vol. VII, pt. I (April, 1973), p. 252.

93. *Census of India 1901*, Vol. XVII, p. 143.

94. Spencer, Levan, 'Communalism in the Punjab : The Ahmadiya versus the Arya Samaj during the lifetime of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,' *PPP*, Vol. V, pt. II (Oct. 1971), pp. 320-42.

95. Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of India*, p. 735.

#### THE ROOTS OF NATIONALISM IN PUNJAB

conversion efforts of the opposite communities. In negative side these movements had encouraged competitions for their distinct social identity resulting a dangerous rift among the various communities. It caused the Hindu-Sikh tension and riots between the Hindus and the Muslims. It also started a process of communal riots and conflict among the various communities, which provided a handle to the British authorities, the latter accelerated it in the early twentieth century.

Similarly these movements also laid the roots of nationalism in the Punjab which soon started in new phase of national struggle, for example, the Singh Sabha Movement gave impetus to the rise of the Akalis, the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam became the nucleus of the Muslim League and the Arya Samaj provided a sizable membership to the Congress party in the Punjab.

## Indian National Congress in Punjab, 1885-1899

KABAL SINGH\*

Coming late under the British rule, slow in taking to English education, having few non-official Anglo-Indians, and with its press rigidly controlled by the Government, the Punjab had little organized political activity in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> It was in January 1865 that G. W. Leitner<sup>2</sup> founded at Lahore the 'Anjuman-i-Ishat-i-Alum-i-Mufida Punjab,' popularly known as Anjuman-i-Punjab.<sup>3</sup> But this organisation did not represent the true interests of the Indians; it appeared to be promoting the personal ideas and interests of Leitner.<sup>4</sup> It was mainly to counteract what they regarded as the baneful activities of Leitner and his associates that some young English educated Punjabis and expatriate Bengalis, led by Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia started at Lahore the Indian Association, on the similar lines as that of Calcutta.<sup>5</sup> It was the first political organization in the Punjab that provided a common platform for all sections of the Indian community.<sup>6</sup>

The Lahore Indian Association continued to exist even after the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885. It is significant to observe that the delegates to the first Indian National Congress held at Bombay, Lala Murlidhar and Pandit Satyanand Agnihotri, were nominated by the Lahore Indian Association.<sup>7</sup> For the second session held at Madras the Lahore Indian Association choose a delegation of seventeen members to ensure sufficient Punjabi representation.<sup>8</sup> For

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1. S. R. Mehrotra, *Emergence of Indian National Congress* (Delhi, 1971), p. 211.

2. Principal of local Government College and recognized scholar of oriental languages and literature, with a reputation in England and Europe.

3. K. W. Jones, *Arya Dharm* (New Delhi, 1976), p. 25. For details see Nazar Singh, 'Anjuman-i-Ishat-i-'Alum-i-Mufida,' *Punjab History Conference Proceedings* (Patiala, 1982), p. 137.

4. S. R. Mehrotra, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

6. Surendranath Banerjee, *A Nation in Making* (Bombay, 1963), p. 43.

7. *The Tribune*, 9 January 1886.

8. K. W. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

every subsequent session the delegates from Punjab were elected by holding public meetings in different towns of the Punjab,<sup>9</sup> except in 1895-96<sup>10</sup> when provincial conference was held to choose the delegates for the Congress Session. In the absence of Provincial Congress in the Punjab, the Lahore Indian Association played a leading role in electing the delegates for various sessions of the Indian National Congress.

It may be noted that after the session of 1886, the number of Punjab delegates again declined to 9 in 1887 session. In 1888, however, their number increased to 80, still small in comparison with other provinces.<sup>11</sup> Many Punjabi Hindu leaders became involved in the Congress as a result of the anti-Congress statements of Syed Ahmad Khan in 1887 at Lucknow and in 1888 at Meerut.<sup>12</sup> The Muslims turned away from the Congress politics due to these speeches. At this juncture the Congress politics took on the characteristic of communal competition, of an issue between Hindus and Muslims, and as such appealed particularly to Arya Samajists.<sup>13</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai wrote anonymous letters to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan regarding his statements about the Congress. He said, "I had produced nothing that would bring me a name. But the 'open letters' at once made me famous."<sup>14</sup> At the same time, attitude of the British Government about the Congress underwent a change from benevolent tolerance to active opposition. At this time (in 1888) Lala Lajpat Rai joined the Congress and attended as a delegate, beginning a long but uneven involvement in that organization.<sup>15</sup>

The interest of the Punjabis in the Congress faded, due to the domination of Bengal and Bombay politicians, after three years. Their representation in the Congress sessions again decreased, i.e., 62 in 1889; 18 in 1890; and 5 in 1891.<sup>16</sup> For sometime the politics of

9. See *The Tribune*, of 15, 19, 21 December 1888; 19 Jan. 1889; 27 Nov. 1889; 4, 7, 11 Dec. 1889; 26 Nov. and 10 Dec. 1890; 21 Nov. 14, 16 Dec. 1892; 25 Nov. 13, 16, 23 Dec. 1893; 2 Dec. 1899; 11, 25 Dec. 1900; 12 Dec. 1901; 15 Dec. 1904; 7, 16 Dec., 1905.

10. *The Tribune*, 7 Dec. 1895 and 16 Nov. 1896.

11. Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom* (New Delhi, 1975), p. 58.

12. K. P. Karunakaran, *Religious and Political Awakening in India* (Delhi, 1965), p. 140.

13. N. G. Barrier, 'Punjab Politics and the Disturbances of 1907,' unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1966, p. 50.

14. V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Lala Lajpat Rai : Autobiographical Writings* (Delhi, 1965), p. 85.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 104, 122.

the Punjab only centred around *The Tribune*, Majithia and his allies.' The Aryas were caught in a dilemma about the Congress. They thought, "What should be the official position of the Samaj towards the Congress and generally towards the world of political action?"<sup>17</sup> The Arya Samaj declared, "Those who do take part in politics, they do so as patriotic citizens, and not at all as members of the Arya Samaj."<sup>18</sup> Those who criticised them for this announcement said, "...it is a matter of great regret that Aryas as a body should not take up the cause of the National Congress. They are under the impression that they have hitherto acted as a religious body, and that by taking up political questions they might rouse the suspicions of Government."<sup>19</sup>

To speed up the Congress work in Punjab the ninth annual session of the Indian National Congress was held at Lahore from 27-30 December 1893. No less than 867 delegates attended the session out of which 481 belonged to the Punjab.<sup>20</sup> The Congress passed the resolutions demanding proper application of Indian Councils Act of 1892 and representation for the Punjab either in the Viceroy's or in any local Council, Legislative Council for Punjab, to raise the status of the Chief Court of the Punjab to that of a chartered High Court, separation of judicial and executive function, increase of public expenditure on higher education and reduction of fees in schools and colleges, etc., etc.

In spite of the fact 481 Punjabis participated in the Lahore Session as local delegates, their interest in the activities of the Congress could not be sustained. The Aryas did not take keen interest in the Congress session as they were engrossed in the intra-organizational struggles and their economic enterprises.<sup>21</sup> Even Lala Lajpat Rai did not join the Reception Committee of the Congress.<sup>22</sup> The Punjabis found little willingness on the part of the Congress establishment to accept their programme of educational and industrial 'self-help,' and the meeting ended in bitterness between the provincial and national leaders.<sup>23</sup>

17. K. W. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *The Tribune*, 16 June, 1888.

20. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

21. V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Lala Lajpat Rai : Autobiographical Writings* (Delhi, 1967), p. 89.

22. *Ibid.*

23. N. G. Barrier, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

The following years witnessed the thin representation of the Punjabis in the annual Congress Sessions. The Punjabis sent only four delegates in 1894, three in 1895, seven in 1896 and one each in 1897 and 1898.<sup>24</sup> Thus during the years prior to 1899, no forces brought the Congress and the Punjab together. Only with the coming of Land Alienation Bill the Punjabis' participation in the Congress increased in 1899 and it was one of the important reasons that they invited the 1900 Congress to Lahore.

It will be pertinent to assess briefly the achievements and failures of the activities of the Indian National Congress in respect of the Punjab during the period 1885-1899. During this decade and a half the Indian National Congress had passed a number of resolutions about this province but the British authorities responded favourably only to very few demands of the Congress.

The Indian Councils Act of 1861 provided for the establishment of Legislative Councils in the Provinces except the Punjab. The Punjabis raised this issue in the annual sessions of the Congress. Lala Murli Dhar speaking on this in the first annual meeting in 1885 at Bombay had said, "The previous speakers had spoken of the existing Legislative Councils as 'shams' but in the North-West Provinces and the Punjab even these 'shams' had no existence ..."<sup>25</sup> In 1886 Lala Kanahya Lal raised this issue and said that Punjab was prepared for such an institution. In the 1893 Congress Session, as already mentioned, a resolution to the same effect was passed. It was due to the efforts of the Congress that the Legislative Council was established in the Punjab in 1897. The Punjab delegates in the Congress Session of 1897 expressed their thanks to the Government and also regretted its limitations. The resolution was passed as under :<sup>26</sup>

Resolved that this Congress, while thanking the Government for granting the boon of a Legislative Council to the Punjab, places on record its regret that they have not extended to the Councillors the rights of interpellation, and to the people the right of recommending Councillors for nomination, such as are enjoyed by the Councillors and people in the other Provinces.

In 1872 the Government of India introduced the trial by jury

24. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, pp. 182, 206, 229, 251, 270.

25. 1885 Congress Report, p. 28.

26. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 269.



giving powers to Session Judges and High Courts of setting aside verdicts of acquittal by the jury. The Congress declared this system unsuitable to the Indian people. Lala Kanahya Lal opposing this system said that due to the comparative backwardness of the Punjab it would be difficult to find suitable persons to act as members of the jury. The already powerful district officers, of course, would not find it difficult to collect a sufficient number of their yeomen to sit on the jury and give a verdict according to their wishes.<sup>27</sup> Due to these reasons the Punjabis opposed this system tooth and nail.

From the ancient times Punjab was an agricultural province. The majority of its population was dependent on agriculture. No doubt the Congress was dominated by the urban commercial class and the landlords, but it could not afford to ignore the interests of general peasantry. It, therefore, tried to safeguard the interests of agriculturists. There was no permanent settlement in the Punjab. Immediately after annexation, a rough assessment was made only for two or three years. Every year, during the summary settlement, the Government lowered the demand where it felt that the existing pressure was heavy. In the meantime, a machinery for making a regular settlement was organised.<sup>28</sup> After the completion of the first Regular Settlement in the 1860s, there was a steady increase in the value and rate of land revenue demand due to the waste lands brought under cultivation and the development of canals and other public works.<sup>29</sup> The British authorities would increase the demand of land revenue from time to time as there was no permanent settlement. The Congress passed resolutions repeatedly in its various sessions, demanding permanent settlement in the Punjab and other provinces.<sup>30</sup> Bakshi Jaishi Ram and Bawa Narayan Singh of Amritsar were the notable Punjabis who were among the prominent sponsors and supporters of such resolutions.<sup>31</sup> The British authorities remained indifferent to the demand, although they took certain measures for the welfare of the tenants.

During this period, there was the domination of Arya Samajists in the Congress. Being the representatives of educated and commercial

27. *1886 Congress Report*, pp. 79-80.

28. Y. B. Mathur, *British Administration of Punjab* (Delhi, n.d.), p. 138.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

30. For details, see Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 93, 118, 159, 179.

31. See Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

communities, they voiced the need for greater educational and industrial facilities. No doubt, the socio-religious movements in the province worked for the growth of education, but still it remained in a backward position as compared with the other provinces. Literacy was very low in the Punjab. In 1891, only 3.32% of the total population was returned as literates.<sup>32</sup> Although the British Government made some efforts to encourage education in the Punjab, yet their early attempts were motivated largely by the necessity of securing employees for subordinate ranks of government services.<sup>33</sup> The Punjabi delegates raised their voice for the development of higher education in annual Congress Sessions, notably in the 1893 session in which a resolution demanding increase of expenditure on higher education was passed. Subsequently, in 1900 the Congress passed a resolution to the effect that at least half a day at each annual session of the Congress be devoted to the consideration of education and industrial problems of the country.<sup>34</sup>

The Punjabis were also demanding definite constitution for the Congress. They wanted to be in a dominating position in the subjects committee, so as to be able to discuss the economic programme in the sessions of the Congress.<sup>35</sup> The Congress took up the matter in various sessions. In 1895 Bakshi Jaishi Ram speaking for the demand of constitution suggested that all office-holders in the Congress should be elected and that each province ought to be represented as a 'Cabinet or Council' of the Congress.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the constitution was drafted in 1899.<sup>37</sup>

The Punjabis were also demanding that the status of the chief court of the province, established in 1866, be raised to that of a High Court. With the extension of Act VIII of 1859 to the Punjab, the law regulating the administration of civil justice in the Punjab had been assimilated to that in force in the north-western province.<sup>38</sup> High Court had been set up in the north-western province much earlier,

32. *Census of India 1891*, p. 249.

33. B.S. Saini, *Social and Economic History of Punjab* (Delhi, 1975), p. 155.

34. Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

35. Ganeshi Mahajan, 'Punjabi Participation in the Indian National Congress,' *Punjab History Conference Proceedings* (Patiala, 1980), p. 216.

36. *1895 Congress Report*, p. 60.

37. *1899 Congress Report*, pp. xxvii-xxxi.

38. Y. B. Mathur, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

in 1866. So, the Punjabis raised this question in the annual Congress meetings. Bakshi Jaishi Ram speaking for the High Court in Punjab pointed out that in 1891-92 the income by the sale of court fee and stamps in the Punjab was Rs. 40,69,000 and expenditure of the Department of Law and Justice was Rs. 29,66,000. Thus after deducting the sale of stamps, etc., there was a surplus of about ten lakhs every year. In view of the relatively greater amount of litigation in the province there was a strong case for the establishment of High Court in the Punjab.<sup>39</sup> The Congress, as already mentioned, passed a resolution putting forth the demand in its session of 1893.

The Congress also reacted to the Punjab Land Alienation Bill,<sup>40</sup> restricting the transfer of land from the agricultural to the 'non-agricultural classes. The Punjabi delegates representing the commercial class, took this issue to the annual session of 1899. They invited the next Congress to Punjab with the object, among other things, of opposing this Bill. They organised protest meeting and sent representation to the Government in this regard. But no success was achieved.

All these were the major issues about Punjab dominating the Congress during 1885-1899. About the handling of these issues, the approach of Congress was moderate. The Congress leaders adopted the methods of passing resolutions, sending petitions and holding protest meetings. During this period the leadership of All-India Congress was in the hands of moderates. In Punjab too, most of the Congressmen were moderates. They were greatly influenced by the western liberalism, denounced caste system and untouchability and advocated the cause of widow-re-marriage and female education. They condemned superstitions<sup>41</sup> and aspired to purge the society on liberal lines. They were for the modernization of Indian Society

39. *1894 Congress Report*, p. 129.

40. For details about Land Alienation Act and reaction of the Congress thereto, see K. S. Bhatti, "Indian National Congress in Punjab 1885-1905" (unpublished M.Phil thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1985), pp. 97-121.

41. For example, Dyal Singh Majithia said, "Down with shames and hypocrisies which played such a prominent part in the life of the Indian people! Weed out old and worn-out customs, stupid prejudices and superstitious beliefs. Do away poverty, misery and ignorance and pull down the false gods. March with the times, feed the good, trample down the evil and create a new India on the new forces of vitality and old elements of wisdom." See S. P. Sen (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1973), p. 15.

taking what was good in the western culture and denouncing the old rigid traditions. They were in favour of the continuation of British empire in India which, they felt, was in their interest. They were not in favour of transfer of power to Indian hands. But they were demanding better administration both for the welfare of people as well as for that of the Government. Speaking in 1893 as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress in Lahore, Dyal Singh Majithia said :<sup>42</sup>

What the Congress contends is not that the country should be transferred from English to Indian hands, no, not change of hands, for it would be entirely suicidal, but that the people should be governed on the broad principles which have been held by the eminent British statesmen and administrators themselves to be the most conducive to the interests of both rulers and the subjects.

He further remarked, "We happily live under a constitution whose watchword is freedom and main pillar is toleration."<sup>43</sup>

The only person who differed from the moderate leadership of the Punjab Congress was Lala Lajpat Rai.<sup>44</sup> He criticised Curzon's system of Government as despotic, and also disliked the moderate policy of the Congress in the face of government highhandedness. He regarded the practice of passing long-winded pious resolutions and making petitions as 'mendicancy' and 'totally obsolete.'<sup>45</sup> He also criticised the economic policies of the British Government which were not favourable to the Indian economy. He brought out in his writings and speeches lurid comparisons between the economic conditions in India and those in the western countries, and attacked the economic exploitation by the British as unjust and oppressive.<sup>46</sup>

42. 1893 Congress Report, p. 9.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

44. Popularly known as 'Punjab Kesri' he was born at village Dhudhike in Jagraon tehsil of Ludhiana district. His father, Lala Radha Krishan was an Urdu teacher in a Government School and belonged to a *Bania* family. After passing Law Degree from the Panjab University, he started practice in law, first at Hissar and then at Lahore. Influenced by Dayananda, he became an active member of Arya Samaj. Fauja Singh, *Eminent Freedom Fighters of Punjab* (Patiala, 1972), Vol. I, pp. 162-65.

45. S. P. Sen (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 389.

46. *Ibid.*

Lajpat Rai was the only prominent Punjabi among the Congress leaders who criticised the Government in strong language. He tried to convince his fellow Aryas that the English rule was harmful to India. Since the moderate leaders of the Congress did not agree with him, he abstained from attending the sessions of the Congress during 1893-1899. He also used his personal influence to prevent other Aryas from participating in the activities of the Congress.

From what has been discussed above it will have been obvious that Indian National Congress could not gain much popularity in the Punjab during 1885-1899. There are certain reasons for this. First, the Punjab was backward in political awakening as compared to the more advanced presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras which had come under deeper influence of western influence. Second, domination of communalism in Punjab politics. Third, Provincial Congress could not be set up here for a long time and the Congress was mostly fed by the political bodies like Lahore Indian Association or socio-religious organisations like the Arya Samaj.

## C.P.I. And The Punjabi Suba Demand

DR JASMAIL SINGH BRAR\*

Like many other traditional societies, politics in India has been influenced by primordial loyalties. A large number of political movements in the Indian states have been launched on the basis of such symbols as religion, language, region and caste. The Punjabi Suba movement which played an important role in shaping the contours of Punjab politics also belongs to this category. However, Communist parties face enormous difficulty in dealing with such movements. If they oppose them they alienate those segments of the population which are drawn into these movements. On the other hand, if they identify with such movements, their ideological image is tarnished and they lose the support of secular elements in the society. How the Communist parties resolve this dilemma and what constrains influence their behaviour constitute the main theme of this research article.

It is based on a working hypothesis that the attitude of the Communist parties towards the movements which are based on primordial loyalties is determined by political expediency rather than by ideological considerations. The validity of this hypothesis has been tested by analysing the attitude of the CPI towards the Punjabi Suba demand which has been a major issue in Punjab politics after independence.

The genesis of the Punjabi Suba demand can be traced back to the politics of the Akali Dal in the pre-independence period. It is closely associated with the growth of the separate identity of the Sikhs and the communal polarisation in the politics of the state. The Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs were the three major religious communities in Punjab before partition. There was a great deal of rivalry among them for acquiring predominance in the politics of the state and getting maximum benefits from the British rulers. This rivalry was further accentuated as a result of the introduction of communal electorate in the overall context of the British policy of 'divide and

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rule.' As political concessions were granted on the basis of communal considerations, each community made efforts to project its separate identity. It resulted in sharp communal polarisation and made it difficult for these communities to have a consensus on political issues. As the time for independence approached, each community became concerned about protecting its interests in the future administrative set-up of the province.

The Muslim League demanded the creation of a separate state of Pakistan for protecting the Muslims from the domination of the Hindus. The demand for Pakistan perturbed the leadership of the Akali Dal. It implied the subjection of the Sikhs to the dominance of the Muslims. The leadership of the Akali Dal demanded the creation of an "Azad Punjab" to counter demand of the Muslim League. The proposal was meant to change the boundaries of Punjab by excluding Muslim majority western districts from it so that a majority of the Hindus and the Sikhs could be saved from Muslim domination.<sup>1</sup> However, the demand for Azad Punjab did not find favour with the British rulers. In this situation, the leadership of the Akali Dal demanded that if the Muslim demand for Pakistan was accepted, the Sikhs should also be given a separate Sikh state.<sup>2</sup>

The problem of the future reorganisation of the province obliged the leadership of the CPI to make its stand on these issues clear. The CPI leadership gave the status of a nationality to the Muslims and supported their demand for the creation of Pakistan on the basis of their right for self-determination.<sup>3</sup> It was argued that the Muslims of Western Punjab (beyond the river Satluj), "bear the distinct impress of a nationality, with a continuous territory, language, culture, economic life and psychological make-up."<sup>4</sup> But the CPI was initially reluctant to give the right of self-determination to the Sikhs. The denial of this right to the Sikhs was based on the argument that they had no contiguous territory and were "an interspersed minority spread all over some districts, but having a majority nowhere except in some Tehsils here and there. A Sikh homeland, therefore, cannot be carved

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1. N. N. Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register*, 1943, Vol. I, pp. 294-95.

2. Saiya, M. Rai, *Legislative Politics and Freedom Struggle in the Punjab*, New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1984, p. 313.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 301.

4. G. Adhikari, "National Unity Now," *People's War*, August 9, 1942.

for them."<sup>5</sup> But, the party changed its stand on this issue a year later. In 1945, G. Adhikari, an important theoretician of the party, supported the demand for a separate Sikh homeland.<sup>6</sup>

It is thus clear that both in the case of the Muslim and the Sikhs, the attitude of the CPI was determined by political considerations. The support to the demand for Pakistan was meant to appease the Muslim League for forging Congress-Muslim League-Communist Unity against the Unionist party. The support to the demand for Sikh homeland was meant to win over the Sikh peasantry which had been alienated because of the CPI's support to the demand for Pakistan.<sup>7</sup>

The Sikhs could not get a homeland and decided to cast their lot with India. The decision of the Sikhs to join India was apparently influenced by the assurances given by the Congress leaders that the special privileges of the Sikhs as a minority would be protected. But, as the Constitution of India was based on secular principles, the Congress leaders found it difficult to keep up their pre-independence promises. The special privileges of the Sikhs were abolished under the Constitution. In this situation, the leadership of the Akali Dal demanded the creation of a Punjabi Suba, which apparently meant the establishment of a Sikh majority state.

The renewal of the demand for the reorganisation of the state by the Akali Dal obliged the CPI to make its stand clear on this issue. In the changed situation, the CPI could not be expected to support the right of the Sikhs for self determination. In fact, the communal tension generated by the partition of India in 1947 and the suppression of the Telengana uprising in 1951 made it clear to the CPI leadership that support to further separation would be both an unpopular and unsuccessful policy in Indian politics. The party, therefore, changed its earlier stand on this issue. Instead of supporting the demand for a Sikh state, the party decided to demand the reorganisation of the state on the basis of language.

The demand for the creation of a Punjabi state was made the central slogan of the party at the time of the third state party conference

5. P. C. Joshi, *They Must Meet Again*, Bombay : People's Publishing House, 1944, p. 313.

6. G. Adhikari, *Sikh Homeland through Hindu-Muslim-Sikh Unity*, Bombay : People's Publishing House, 1945, pp. 1-20.

7. Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 314.



held at Amritsar in 1953.<sup>8</sup> In pursuance of this demand, the Punjab state committee of the party, in a memorandum submitted to the States Reorganisation Commission in April 1954, demanded that all Punjabi-speaking areas of the Pepsu be joined with Delhi and certain areas of Eastern U.P. to form one state. After proper settlement of boundaries with Punjab, Pepsu and U.P., a new state of Himachal should be created.<sup>9</sup> This formula could easily be characterised as a means of subverting the Sikh demand.

The States Reorganisation Commission, in its report issued in October 1955, rejected the demand for Punjabi Suba and recommended the merger of Punjab, Pepsu and Himachal Pradesh. The Akali leaders denounced the Commission's report and threatened to launch an agitation. There were threats of counter-agitation by the Hindus. The communal harmony in the state was considerably disturbed. The Congress High Command evolved a compromise formula to solve this problem.

Under the new arrangement, popularly known as the Regional formula, the state was divided into two so-called Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking regions. Punjabi and Hindi were recognised as the languages of administration at the district levels in their respective regions while both the languages had equal status at the state level. But, the demarcation of regions was not on the linguistic but on religious basis. Kangra, a Punjabi-speaking area was included in Hindi region.

Serious difference arose in the state leadership of the C.P.I. over the assessment of the Regional Formula. The minority faction favoured its acceptance under the prevailing circumstances in the state. Keeping in view its support base among the trade unions, minority faction hoped that it would reduce communal tension in the state and also prevent the division of trade union workers on communal lines. But the majority faction in the Punjab party decided to oppose the Regional Formula. It argued that it was nothing than the demand of the Hindu communalists for greater Punjab. In fact, the dominant leadership feared that support to the Regional Formula would harm its support among the peasants who were the main supporters of the

8. *Political Report* submitted at the Fourth State Party Conference (Jandiala, 1956), Jullundur : Awami Printing Press, p. 497.

9. *Memorandum submitted by the Punjab-Pepsu Committee of Communist Party of India to the States Reorganisation Commission* (Mimeo), Jullundur, May 24, 1954, pp. 2-3.

Punjabi Suba demand. On an appeal by the minority faction, the politbureau revised the decision and asked the state unit to accept the Regional Formula. The politbureau stated the acceptance of the principle that Punjab was bilingual state and making provisions for the development of Punjabi language in the Punjabi region was an advance on the existing arrangements.<sup>10</sup> However, after its formal decision to support the Regional Formula, the party made no efforts to make it a success. It even neglected the demand for the inclusion of Kangra in the Punjabi speaking region.<sup>11</sup>

The Regional Formula satisfied neither the Hindus nor the Sikhs. Master Tara Singh, the leader of the Akali Dal, again threatened to launch an agitation for the creation of a Punjabi Suba in January 1960. The threat of an impending agitation forced the C.P.I. leadership to take a clear-cut stand on this issue. Due to sharp differences in the party leadership, it was decided to have an inner party debate on the issue. A document containing the viewpoints of different sections of the party leadership on language and Punjabi Suba issues was circulated among all party units in the state.<sup>12</sup> The majority leadership in the state executive expressed the view that the Communist party was committed in principle to the reorganisation of the state on the basis of language, the concrete situation in the state does not warrant immediate support to this demand. It was argued that the demand could not be supported due to lack of nationality sentiment among the people of the state. In such a situation, it was argued, the party should oppose this demand and stick to its earlier stand of making the regional formula a success. But the demand for the creation of Haryana state was supported.<sup>13</sup>

The majority leadership thus supported the demand for the linguistic reorganisation of the state in the case of Haryana, but was not prepared to accept this principle in the case of Punjab and Himachal. In fact, it feared that in the later case, it would create disunity in its support structure.

10. *Political Report*, adopted by the Fifth State Party Conference (Ludhiana, 1958), Jullundur, Awami Printing Press, pp. 40-42.

11. *Rajsi Report* (Political Report) in Documents of the Sixth State Party Conference (1961), p. 17.

12. The document was entitled, "*Suba Te Zaban De Swal Samabandhi*." (On the question of language and Punjabi Suba) Circular No. 4/60, dated February 2, 1960 from the State Council of the party to all district councils and party branches.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-4.

Another viewpoint was put forward by Bhag Singh Sajjan. He demanded that all Punjabi speaking areas be joined together to form a single state. The tribal and hill people within Punjab be given an opportunity to develop their culture. Punjabi should be recognized as the official language of the state, but hill people should be allowed to write it in Devnagri and Urdu.<sup>14</sup>

Sohan Singh Josh, in his thesis, pointed out that the demand for Punjabi Suba was a democratic demand which had the support of the people in the state. Any support to this demand would strengthen the democratic movement in the state and enhance the prestige of the party.<sup>15</sup> Similar views were expressed by Baba Gurmukh Singh who demanded that the party should take initiative in supporting the demand for the reorganisation of the state on the basis of language.<sup>16</sup> As these leaders were working on the peasant front, such a line of action would have strengthened their support among the peasantry.

In another thesis put forward by Desh Raj Chadha, Jagjit Singh Anand, Bhag Singh Sajjan and Darshan Singh Canadian, it was argued that Marxists support national movement only when they weaken imperialism and strengthen the struggle of the working class. As the demand for Punjabi Suba in the present situation creates divisions among the population of the state, it should not be supported. Instead, the party should lay emphasis on the proper functioning of regional committees, inclusion of Kangra in Punjabi speaking region and creation of communal harmony in favour of a democratic solution of the problem. However, in its long term perspective, the party should work for the creation of a Punjabi speaking state.<sup>17</sup>

After inner party discussion the party decided that it would oppose the Akali agitation for the creation of a Punjabi Suba on the basis of religion and work for the reorganisation of the state purely on a linguistic basis. Henceforth, it would be the policy of the party to mobilize the masses in favour of its stand by creating unity among the people on this issue.<sup>18</sup>

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

18. Harkishan Singh Surjeet, *Zaban De Adhar Te Punjab di Hadbandi* (Reorganisation of Punjab on the basis of language), Jullundur: Awami Printing Press, July 1960, pp. 32-38.

When the Akali Dal intensified its agitation on this issue in 1961, the state executive of the party decided to launch an educative campaign in the state for explaining the stand of the party and for strengthening Hindu-Sikh unity. The party leadership also decided to violate section 144 in case the government resorted to this measure for scuttling its campaign. In order to control the increasing communal tension in the state, the government imposed section 144 and started arresting the opposition leaders who were supporting the agitation in one way or the other. Some CPI leaders were also arrested. Thereupon, the party decided to launch a *satyagraha* in defence of civil liberties. The minority faction interpreted this step as an indirect support to the Akali agitation.<sup>19</sup> With the failure of the Akali agitation and the return of normalcy in the state, the *satyagraha* was withdrawn.

The failure of the agitation brought significant changes in the politics of the Akali Dal. Sant Fateh Singh replaced Master Tara Singh as the leader of the Akali Dal in 1963. He realized the importance of a secular approach while demanding Punjabi Suba and abandoned the communal approach which was earlier followed by Master Tara Singh. Sant Fateh Singh demanded the reorganisation of the state on a purely linguistic basis. He tried to persuade the Congress leaders at the centre about the genuineness of the demand for the reorganisation of the State. However, when his persuasive approach failed, he also resorted to pressure tactics. Sant Fateh Singh decided to undertake a fast over the Punjabi Suba demand in July 1965. He also accused the Central government of discriminating against the Sikhs. Realising that this step would increase communal tension in the state and presumably also calculating that in case of success, the Akali Dal would claim full credit, the C.P.I. tried to dissuade Sant Fateh Singh from this step and proposed the formation of Joint Action Committee of all parties in support of the linguistic reorganisation of the state. However, when Sant Fateh Singh undertook his fast unto death, the CPI leadership criticised his method and repudiated his charge of discrimination against the Sikhs by the Central government. But, Sant Fateh Singh had to abandon his fast due to Indo-Pak War (1965). Soon after the war, the Congress High Command appointed a Boundary Commission and the state was ultimately reorganised on linguistic basis on November 1, 1966.

19. *Rajsi te Jathebandhak Report* (Political and Organisational Report) adopted by the Seventh State Conference of the CPM (1964), Juliundur : Anupam Printing Press, pp. 18-19.

The above discussion indicates that the CPI did not follow a consistent policy on the nationality question in the state. By characterising the Sikh as a nationality before partition, the party confused a religious group with a nationality. Religion, undoubtedly, plays a part in arousing the nationality sentiment but it is not the same as nationality. The party corrected its stand later on and demanded the reorganisation of the state on the basis of language. However, it never took the initiative in its own hands on this issue and instead played a second fiddle to the Akali Dal.

In fact, the weak and vacillating stand of the C.P.I. on the Punjabi Suba issue seems to have resulted from the imperatives of retaining and even expanding its support structure. Support to the linguistic reorganisation of the state was essential to retain the support of the Sikh peasantry and to keep the Akali leaders in good humour. But by the same token, the party alienated the Hindus and the scheduled castes from the party. The Sikh scheduled castes in rural areas feared that acceptance of the demand for the creation of the Punjabi Suba would further strengthen the domination of the Jats. The policy of extending formal support to the demand for the linguistic reorganisation of the state and doing nothing in practice to achieve it, was thus meant to meet the demands of two opposites but important segments of the C.P.I.'s support structure.

## The Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party : Its Debt to the Ghadr Group

DR KAMLESH MOHAN\*

The Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party, representative of a distinct and novel dimension of the militant movement, seemed to be a revival of the Ghadr Group in the United States. The Ghadr Group remained a source of inspiration and by far the most important formative factor in the rejuvenation and the growth of the militant nationalism in Punjab. Futility of its experiment with bombs and pistols had led to search for new and effective forms of struggle against imperialism and capitalism which later emerged as labour and agrarian movements in this region. Formation of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan was the direct and concrete result of this progressive evolution of the revolutionary tactics. My intention is to explode the myth that the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party was merely a foster-child of the Ghadr Group<sup>1</sup> and its organisation and ideology remained more or less subservient to its mentor.

### II

Idea of the formation of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party originated with the Ghadr Group. In the party-meeting, held towards the end of 1922, it was decided to send Bhai Santokh Singh<sup>2</sup> and Bhai Rattan Singh<sup>3</sup> to India for organising workers and peasants. It was also

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1. H. Williamson, *Communism in India 1933* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India, 1933 ; revised upto 1935), p. 271.
2. Home Department, Political, File No. 235/II, 1926, p. 26. Referring to Santokh Singh, the official report recorded that he was at one time Assistant Secretary of the Ghadr Party in America. During the First World War, he was prominently engaged in anti-British conspiracy in Siam and he was eventually convicted in the San Francisco Conspiracy Case.
3. Bhai Rattan Singh, one of the most enterprising Ghadrites, worked actively to co-ordinate the Ghadr Party work in Euro-Asian-American countries. In this connection, he visited India in 1923 and 1926. He attended the meeting of Fourth Congress of Comintern (1923), Second Congress of Red International Labour Union and of League Against Imperialism (1927). In 1931, he replaced Jawahar Lal on the Executive Committee of the League. He was arrested in 1941 in France and released soon after. He died in Italy in September 1943.

stipulated to establish a connecting link of the Workers' and Peasants' Party in San Francisco. In accordance with the party-directive, Bhai Santokh Singh and Bhai Rattan Singh made a surreptitious entry into India in May 1923.<sup>4</sup> Both of them were arrested in the independent tribal territory of North Western Frontier Province and released on security towards the end of the year.

Bhai Santokh Singh, who had stayed back in India, got in touch with the radical-minded workers of Amritsar, Lahore and Dhariwal. Keeping in view the object of organising workers and peasants, he explored possibilities of launching his project. As a result of his efforts the plan of organising Workers' and Peasants' Party in the Punjab was seriously considered. Presence and active participation of Bhag Singh 'Canadian,' a Ghadrite emissary, in the inaugural meeting of the Punjab Workers' and Peasants' Party on 12 April 1927,<sup>5</sup> indicated the earnest desire of the Ghadr Group to establish rapport with the radical-minded workers in the Punjab. Among those who attended that meeting were included Mir Abdul Majid, Sohan Singh 'Josh,' Kedar Nath Sehgal and Philips Spratt, a communist emissary. The most important resolution of the meeting led to the baptism of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party. The Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party an amalgamation of the Lahore and Amritsar Groups...had sixty members to begin with.

The Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party had framed a statement of its aims and objects and rules and regulations. Its aims were "To secure complete independence from the British Imperialism by every possible means, to liberate workers and peasants from every sort of political, economic and social slavery and to establish their united socialist Republic."<sup>6</sup> Obviously, it was formed with the primary object of

4. H. Williamson, *op. cit.*, p. 261. Writing about the first entry of Santokh Singh and Rattan Singh in May 1923, the British Intelligence Report observed, "In May 1923, these two left for India, financed to a moderate extent by the Communist International. Their mission was to work at the Indian end, the schemes formulated in Kabul, which included the formation of secret revolutionary societies cloaked as communal organisations, the fomenting of trouble amongst the independent frontier tribes, the assassination of British Officers, and the selection of young Sikhs for training in foreign military schools..."

5. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Sessions Judgement 1930*, Vol. I (NAI, New Delhi), Pt. XXXIX, p. 594.

6. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers* (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 167, Exhibit No. P. 344 (T), p. 771—Aims and objects and rules and regulations of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party.

organising workers and peasants. Their active support and involvement were regarded as the decisive factors in a war against imperialism in general and British imperialism in particular. The immediate programme of the party was to accomplish a thorough democratisation of India,<sup>7</sup> leading to political, economic and social emancipation of the masses.<sup>8</sup>

It is clear that the Kirti-Kisan leadership had grasped the anti-imperialistic ideas and imbibed the militant spirit of the political mission of its mentor into a broad-based movement which fixed political independence as its initial target. It may be pointed out that the strategy of the Kirti-Kisan Party was to mount a simultaneous offensive against imperialism and capitalism which had formed a joint front against the revolutionary nationalist forces.

As the later Ghadrites had come under the influence of new social and economic theories of Marx, they began to look upon the British Government as something more than "a predatory organisation maintained by coercion and terrorism."<sup>9</sup> Bhai Santokh Singh, the founder of the "Kirti Lehr" in the Punjab, agreed with the views of the leading figures of the All India Workers' and Peasants' movement. Referring to the tasks of revolution their *joint statement* in the Meerut Conspiracy Case observed, "If this revolution is to succeed, i.e., if it is to perform its bourgeois democratic task, the overthrow of imperialism, the abolition of landlordism, etc., it must fight not only imperialism and landlord class but the bourgeoisie as well."<sup>10</sup> In other words, the workers' and peasants' movement was to be carried on with the purpose of undermining the institutions of imperialism and capitalism—native and foreign.

7. *Ibid.*, Sr. No. 19, Vol. 14, Joint Statement of R. S. Nimbkar and others, p. 4892. Here after it will be cited as *Joint Statement of R.S. Nimabkar and Others*.

8. *Ibid.*, Sr. No. 167, Exhibit No. P. 344 (T), p. 771—Aims and objects and rules and regulations of Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party; see also Sr. No. 161, Exhibit No. P. 549 (15), pp. 922-26, constitution of All India Workers' and Peasants' Party. A comparison of these two documents shows that the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party and All India Workers' and Peasants' Party shared their aims and objects.

9. *The Bulletin* (San Francisco), 20 October 1913, 3:4 Quoted in Emily C. Brown, *Hardayal, Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (New Delhi, 1976), p. 142.

10. *Joint Statement of R.S. Nimbkar and Others*, p. 5415; see also Kartar Singh Latala, *Kirti di Unnati de Sadhan*, in the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), September 1927, p. 27.



Being full aware of the British strategy of 'divide and rule' on the basis of caste, race and religion, the Kirti-Kisan leaders such as Sohan Singh 'Josh' laid special emphasis on the fraternity of common economic and class-interests. Success of the projected national democratic revolution depended upon the United Front of the three main classes. In this connection, *Joint Statement* of the Meerut Conspiracy Case accused pointed out, "...we conceived Workers' and Peasants' Party as the organisational form of that United Front."<sup>11</sup> Later on, thesis of the United Front was certainly an improvement on the Ghadr strategy of reliance either on foreign and or seduction of Indian troops.

The Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party addressed its appeals and messages to a wider audience—elites as well as masses. Obviously, no section of Indian society could be left out in a country-wide revolution. Re-adjustment of social and economic forces was likely to affect the position and fortunes of the capitalists, the bourgeoisie and masses. In a bid to protect their own interests, these sections of society would operate either in opposition to economic and social forces or in cooperation with them. Social and economic dimensions of national revolution remained beyond the purview of the Ghadr plan of action in 1913-14 as a close perusal of the *Ghadr* issues showed. Even the members of the later Ghadr Group, noted for their revolutionary activities and their contacts with the Communist International, could not define the tasks of revolution in any other context than the over throw of foreign rule through guerilla warfare.<sup>12</sup> It was the Kirti-Kisan leadership in this region which defined the nature and scope of revolution and its tactics with considerable clarity. A charter of

11. *Ibid.*, p. 4892.

12. H. Williamson, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-66. Referring to the revival of the Ghadr plotting in 1929, the British Intelligence Report observed, "...there were discussions on the possibility of starting guerilla warfare in India on Irish lines. Communications were also recorded from the Ghadr Party representative in Russia, urging the American Sikhs to stir up trouble in India, and tentative proposals were made to overcome one obvious obstacle to the success of these plans by despatching arms and ammunition to India and by teaching the art of the manufacture of bomb to returning emigrants. This orgy of plans and preparations synchronised with the arrival of Teja Singh Sutantar fresh from his course of military training in a Turkish academy...it was he who was responsible for the emphasis which was laid on the need for training the Party's members on upto date military lines..."

political, social and economic demands was also drafted and resolutions were passed for their speedy fulfilment.<sup>13</sup>

Strategy of the Kirti-Kisan Party as it evolved had lost faith in total reliance on violence as well in non-violence. Doubtful of the efficacy of the Gandhian tactics of non-violence in bringing about radical change in social and economic set-up, the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party did not rule out resort to force. It sanctioned the use of force and even terrorism towards the conclusion of the militant struggle against imperialism and capitalism. But individual terrorism was emphatically condemned by the Kirti-Kisan leaders. *Joint Statement* of the Meerut Conspiracy Case accused analysed the motives underlying the policy of individual terrorism "...the policy itself bears the stamp of the outlook of petty bourgeoisie. It arises from an exaggeration of the role of an individual, the official or the potentate attacked, and results in an exaggeration of the role of an individual who conducts the attack."<sup>14</sup> Sohan Singh 'Josh' and the other Kirti-Kisan leaders opposed it even as a subsidiary line of policy for the energies of most active and self-sacrificing were absorbed by these projects.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the Party was likely to be deprived of the services of the best workers, leading to its slow growth or stagnation.

Similarly, the early Ghadr leaders such as Lala Hardayal disapproved of individual acts of terrorism, "...because most of them have very little social significance."<sup>16</sup> However, he did not condemn the assassination of public officials as a principle. Urgency of dealing with the traitors and informers, who obstructed the progress of the Ghadr movement at every step, had caused this inconsistency. Various aspects of this problem were discussed at length in a number of articles, published in the *Ghadr*. For example, the *Ghadr* dated 29 November 1913, contained a warning, followed by direct advice, "In your way there will be some traitors who will do their best to hinder you. They are the wolves of the English Government. Arrangements

13. For a list of the immediate demands of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party, see *Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers* (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 212, Vol. 3 (2), p. 516—Statement of Pt. Gauri Shankar, one of the organisers of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party, in the court of R. L. Yorke, Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut.

14. *Joint Statement of R.S. Nimbakar and others*, p. 5170.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Quoted in Emily Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-61.

should be made to fix these men first."<sup>17</sup> Concentration on the elimination of sycophants and traitors practically consumed energies of the members and resources of the Ghadr Party and of the Babbar Akali Jatha. It may pointed out that the problem of dealing with the *jholichuks*, which had assumed gravity and urgency for the Ghadrtes and the Babbar Akalis did not figure in the programme of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party.

Use of red-terrorism was sanctioned by the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party. Defining its scope, Sohan Singh 'Josh,' one of the founder-leaders of the Party, observed, "Individual terrorism and red terrorism should not be mixed up together. The latter is employed only when the state machine is captured by the proletariat and not before."<sup>18</sup> The Kirti-Kisan Party contemplated and prepared for the use of force for bringing about national revolution and disbanding reactionary elements."<sup>19</sup> In short, the Ghadr Group had chosen the methods of armed rebellion against foreign rule. Speaking about the stages in the Ghadr movement Hardayal observed, "The time is soon to come when rifle and blood will be used for pen and ink...." Sada Shiv Khankhoje, leader of the action wing of the Ghadr Party, further elaborated the plan of action,<sup>20</sup> which was more or less a guerilla warfare. As opposed to the Ghadr methods, organisation of peasants

17. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

18. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers* (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 218, p. 334—Statement of Sohan Singh 'Josh' in the Court of R. L. Yorke, Additional Sessions Judge, Meerut.

19. *Joint Statement of R. S. Nimbkar and others.*

20. Bala Shastri Hardas, *Armed Struggle for Freedom: Ninety Years of Independence, 1857 to Subhas*, trans. S. S. Apte (Poona Kal Parkashan, 1958), pp. 252-53. Hardas has quoted extensively from Khankhoje's diary which recorded the details about the Ghadr plan of action. Khankhoje wrote "In the first step, it was decided to cut communications by mobbing railway stations and cutting telegraph lines, then destroying the police *chowkis* (police stations), disorganising the military camps and check-posts, etc. When this movement gathered momentum, the second step was to establish revolutionary camps in jungles and border areas, in the hills and valleys, and then to start harassing the English administration and the armies. It was also decided that the question of arms and ammunition was to be solved by raiding English Military camps and armouries. It was not possible for us to purchase and procure arms and weapons by any other means except by guerilla raids on army bases of the English. In pursuance of this plan, we began to move our men and leaders."

and workers was the watchword of the policy of Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party, which had split its bid into two parts : mass-movement and red terrorism. It showed the difference between the attitudes of both these parties towards the tactics of revolution. It also indicated the ideological maturity of the Kirti-Kisan leadership in this region.

The Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party owed special debt to the Ghadr Group for its role in founding the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi, designing the pattern of its growth and guiding its policy. Expertise of Bhai Santokh Singh and Bhag Singh 'Canadian' in the Ghadr techniques of propaganda was an asset for the Kirti-Kisan movement in this region. Realizing the importance of propaganda in organising the workers and the peasants on the basis of economic principles,<sup>21</sup> Bhai Santokh Singh publicised the principles of socialism and created class-consciousness among its readers.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout its career, the *Kirti*, continued to disseminate the ideas and ideals espoused by Bhai Santokh Singh. Views of Karl Marx on private property, nature of class-struggle and ultimate establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat were explained in the idiom of the masses.<sup>23</sup> It was the policy of the *Kirti* to educate the Indian workers and peasants in the application of the Marxian principles to their political, economic and social problems. For example, Principal Chabbil Das's article "*Duniya da Sabh To Wada Pap Garibi*,"<sup>24</sup> showed how poverty could be removed by destroying monopoly of the rich over all kinds of property and means of production. More explicitly, it demanded that property as well as means of production should be nationalised. It was emphasised that only the ideal of service could make the new system successful.<sup>25</sup> Closely

21. "Jiwani Bhai Santokh Singh" in *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), July 1927, pp. 13-15 ; see also its last instalment in *ibid.*, June 1929, pp. 17-19.

22. "Comrade Karl Marx" in *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), May 1929, pp. 56-63 ; see also "Mahatma Karl Marx" in the *Kirti*, April 1927, p. 7.

23. The title page of all the issues of the *Kirti* bore the following lines :  
ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਿਰਤੀਓ ਤੇ ਕਿਸਾਨੋ ਇਕ ਸਿਕ ਹੋ ਜਾਓ, ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਕੋਈ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ।  
ਹਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀਆਂ ਗੁਲਾਮੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੇੜੀਆਂ ਕਟੀਆਂ ਜਾਣਗੀਆਂ ।  
(Workers of the world unite ! You have nothing to lose but your chains of slavery.)

24. The *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), January 1929, pp. 39-46.

25. "Kirti Di Karan" in the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), February 1927, pp. 38-42.

associated with its crusade against capitalism and imperialistic institutions like *Taluqadari* and *Zamindari* was its denigration of religion. Religion, a handmaiden of the capitalists and imperialists was especially criticised for during the masses into fatalism and fanaticism which ultimately led to communalism and political disunity. Its baneful role in the perpetuation of foreign rule, exploitation and monopoly of the rich over the poor was highlighted.

In spite of the threats of searches into its office, confiscation and arrests of its editors,<sup>27</sup> the *Kirti* fulfilled its role of moulding public opinion. It exhorted its readers to give a befitting reply to the official repression by promoting the sale of the *Kirti* which would continue campaign of revolution.<sup>28</sup> It was similar to the appeal which appeared in the *Ghadr* dated 8 November 1913.<sup>29</sup> The peasants, workers and petty bourgeoisie, especially the youth of the lower middle class, formed the bulk of its readers. Being the potential precursors and vanguards of revolution,<sup>30</sup> they were the most suitable recipients of *Kirti's* message of socialism, class-struggle, freedom of press, complete independence and immortality of ideas.<sup>31</sup> Articles on current national issues such as the Simon Commission, Public Safety and Trade Disputes Bills and Round Table Conferences kept the issues of national freedom and individual freedom alive in public-consciousness.

26. Charan Singh Viyogi "Hai Hindustan" in the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), January 1930, pp. 17-18; see also "Sanu is Vele Kehi Jahe Lekhan di Lorh Hai" in the *Kirti*, monthly in Punjabi (Amritsar), May 1929, pp. 12-17.
27. Among the several issues of the *Kirti*, confiscated by the Government of India, notable ones were dated June, August, December 1929. In addition to it, editors of the *Kirti* namely Daljit Singh and Arjan Singh 'Gargaj' were arrested and it published vehement criticism of the handling of their as well as that of Meerut Conspiracy Cases. For example see its issue dated August 1929, pp. 54-57.
28. "Frangh Shahi da Takhta Dol Giya" in the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), December 1929, pp. 1-2.
29. Quoted in J.C. Kerr, *Political Trouble in India 1907-17* (First published in 1971 Indian reprint, Calcutta, 1973), p. 125. The *Ghadr*, dated 8 November 1913, enjoined upon them to finance, read, circulate among their friends as well post it to India in large numbers. Explaining their fifth important duty, it said, "Your fifth duty is to prepare to fight and die in the rising. Independence will not come by reading newspapers and causing to be read. Look out for the time when the rising will take place and you will slay the enemy."
30. "Meerut Jail which Dake de Kirti Auguan da Zabani Suneha" in the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), December 1929, pp. 1-2.
31. "Jug Jug Jive Juggardi" in *ibid.*, August 1929, p. 50; see also "Kirti Lehr Nahin Dabegi" in *ibid.*, pp. 126-27.

Above all, the central theme of fighting against the British imperialism and capitalism underlined their propaganda and campaigns. In its issue dated May 1930, the *Kirti* advised Indians to join hands with Kirtis of the world in order to paralyse imperialism and capitalism.<sup>32</sup>

Being fully appreciative of the contribution of the Ghadr Party, the *Kirti*, ever since its appearance in 1926, followed the consistent policy of expounding their ideas of equality and complete independence.<sup>33</sup> Publication of photographs, biographies and autobiographies of Ghadrtes such as Bhai Santokh Singh and Sohan Singh 'American' continued to inspire the readers of the *Kirti*.<sup>34</sup> Even after the death of its founder, Bhai Santokh Singh, there was no change in the policy of the *Kirti*. It remained an effective medium of propaganda and instruction for the potential militant nationalists. It advised them to avoid lapses in the Ghadr plan of action and strengthen mass organisation. The *Kirti* also supported the movement for the relief of the families of those martyrs who had been imprisoned or hanged,<sup>35</sup> in Lahore Conspiracy Case (1914-15) and Babbar Akali Conspiracy Case (1923-24).

The *Kirti* also received financial help from the Ghadr Group when it was in danger of being forced to suspend its publication. A substantial sum of Rs. 16,000/- from the Ghadr Party, whose members had earned fabulous wealth from its commercial ventures in the United States,<sup>36</sup> saved it.<sup>37</sup> The Canadian American Society, the representative body of the Ghadr Party, sent Rs. 11,000/- for the *Kirti* and Rs. 7,000/- for the *Desh Sewak*.<sup>38</sup>

32. "May Day" in *ibid.*, May 1929, p. 5.

33. "1914-15 de Sahidan Ton Sikhia" in *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

34. See for example Sohan Singh 'American' "Meri Ramkahani" in the *Kirti*, March 1930, pp. 43-52.

35. Kartar Singh Latala "Saddi Sawa Lakhi Appeal" in *ibid.*, July 1926, p. 20. see also Home Department, Political, File No. 235/II, 1926, p. 30. According to the official report, the Canadian American Society sent Rs 20,000/-for the families of the Babbar Akalis.

36. Home Department, Political, File No. 44/36, 1934, p. 4—Statement of Harjap Singh, member of the Hindustan Ghadr Party.

37. Home Department, Political, File No. 6/10, 1928, p. 39.

38. Home Department, Political, File No. 235/II, 1926, p. 30. According to official version, Lakha Singh had brought these funds to India. Since there was no acknowledgement by the recipients of financial aid in India, Pritam Singh and Beant Singh of Hoshiarpur had been deputed in December 1928 to get an account of the money, remitted by the Candian American Society.

While the *Kirti* fought the battle in India itself, its editors kept in close touch with the Ghadr Group in the United States. It served as an effective channel of communication between the Ghadr Group and the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party. There was a constant flow of letters, messages and financial aid from the American to the Indian end. A letter dated 1 June 1927, revealed how the Ghadr Group had helped the editors and managers of the *Kirti* in the formation of its policy. While the Ghadr Group hailed the inception of *Kirti* as the champion of the rights of Kirtis in the Punjab and acclaimed its mission of creating awakening among them, it also gave the practical and useful suggestion of organising and enlisting the support of numerous peasants in the Punjab whose needs and potentialities had so far been ignored. It further stressed the need of widening the scope of the programme of the Kirti-Kisan Party so as to include the benefits and privileges admissible to the peasantry in a free India of future. The Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party had certainly realised the value of their advice; its leaders and its mouth organ, the *Kirti*, proclaimed that the success of the national struggle for freedom depended upon the extent of involvement of the organised force of the Kirtis and Kisans.<sup>39</sup>

Re-designing of the title page of the *Kirti* and modification of its motto, in response to the suggestion of Harjap Singh,<sup>40</sup> Prem Singh and Santa Singh,<sup>41</sup> reflected the faith of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party in the wisdom of the Ghadr Group. Reference by Rattan Singh 'American'<sup>42</sup> to the favourable reaction of the Kirtis in Europe and

39. "Zamindar Sabha" in the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), February 1928, pp. 77-78; see also "Brij Narain Zamindar Te Kisan" in *ibid.*, March 1930, pp. 16-19.

40. Home Department, Political, File No. 44/36, 1934, pp. 15, 18—Statement of Harjap Singh, a member of the Hindustan Ghadr Party.

41. Santa Singh and Prem Singh "Saddi Berlin di Chitthi" in the *Kirti*, July 1927, p. 50. The original title page of the *Kirti* depicted the dead body of a labourer who had died on account of tyranny of the capitalists and its motto exhorted only the *Kirtis* to unite against the capitalists. Issues of the *Kirtis* dated August and September 1927, were without any illustration. But its issues from October 1927 onwards, bore an illustration, designed in deference to the wishes of the *Kirtis* of Europe. The new title page, showing figures of two persons shaking hands, symbolised unity of the Kirtis and Kisans. Its motto was also addressed to both of them.

42. Rattan Singh 'American,' "Saddi Europe di Chitthi" in the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), May 1928, p. 49.

other countries to the prompt implementation of their suggestion further indicated extent of its ideological appeal to the Kirtis.

The journal was proclaimed to be the, "...voice of Indian workers in America and Canada...The journal will sympathise with all the workers throughout the world...the subjugated, weak, oppressed nations and subjugated India..."<sup>43</sup> The *Kirti*, dated August 1927, carried an appeal from the Ghadr Group to the Chinese nationals to guard their Right of asylum by protecting Dasaundha Singh, an Indian national in China, from being arrested.<sup>44</sup>

Messages of hope and confidence in the epoch-making role of the *Kirti* also strengthened the determination of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party to carry on its propagandist activities. A letter from New Zealand pointed out how magazine like the *Kirti* could pave the way for the salvation of India.<sup>45</sup> Another letter from Rattan Singh 'American' exhorted the Kirtis of the world especially Indians to unite in their fight against capitalism and imperialism and establish dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>46</sup> Writings of Harjap Singh notably "Lenin and Kisan,"<sup>47</sup> "Hindustan Naujawan and Terrorism,"<sup>48</sup> and "Arrest of Santa Singh at Madras," in the *Kirti* highlighted different facets of the Kirti-Kisan movement in the Punjab and its ideological stand on various issues such as the official policy of arresting the Ghadrite emissaries in India.

The members of the Ghadr Group such as Rattan Singh 'American' and Harjap Singh also evaluated the work done by the *Kirti* for the dissemination of anti-imperialistic and anti-capitalistic ideal under the joint editorship of Bhai Santokh Singh and Bhag Singh, 'Canadian.' Rattan Singh's second visit to India in August 1926, had been undertaken with the specific purpose of assessing the role of the *Kirti* group

43. *Meerut Conspiracy Case Papers* (NAI, New Delhi), Sr. No. 167, Exhibit No. P. 344 (T), p. 771.

44. Munsha Singh "Cheen Vich Hindia di Pharo Phari," in the *Kirti*, August 1927, pp. 25-28. Munsha Singh was the Secretary of the Hindustan Ghadr Party.

45. Amar Singh "A Letter from New Zealand" in *ibid.*, July 1927, p. 61.

46. Rattan Singh 'American' "Saddi Europe di Chitthi" in *Kirti*, May 1928, p. 49.

47. For its text see the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), February 1930, pp. 3-8.

48. For its text see the *Kirti*, monthly in Panjabi (Amritsar), February 1930, pp. 9-13.

49. Home Department, Political, File No. 44/36, 1934, p. 14—Statement of Harjap Singh. He deposed that he had contributed an article "Arrest of Santa Singh at Madras," In spite of my best efforts, I could not locate its text.



in India.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Harjap Singh's surreptitious entry into India via Afghanistan in 1930<sup>51</sup> also indicated his serious concern with the growth of the "Kirti-Lehr" in the Punjab. His letters to Bhag Singh 'Canadian,' asking for a report of the work done by the Kirti-Kisan Party in the Punjab was a prelude to his visit to India.<sup>52</sup> In the course of his stay in India, Harjap Singh's concentrated efforts for the renewal of contacts with the returned emigrants helped in increasing the number of active workers of the Kirti-Kisan movement in the Punjab. Before he offered himself for arrest in his native village Mahilpur on 11 April 1931,<sup>53</sup> Harjap Singh had managed to get in touch with Inder Singh, Santa Singh Gairdiwind, Bhag Singh Uppal Bhupa, Karam Singh of China and Dasaundha Singh.<sup>54</sup> Besides, Harjap Singh, alive to the need of being conversant with the growth of the Naujawan as well as the Congress movements, attended their respective sessions; these had coincided with that of the All India Kirti-Kisan Party conference at Karachi in March 1931.

From 1926 to 1931, the Ghadr Group had displayed a good deal of initiative in spearheading the movement for organising peasants and workers in this region. Their activities were particularly noticeable in connection with the founding of the *Kirti*, its growth and sustenance. Their contribution to the rise and expansion of the Kirti-Kisan movement in the Punjab was limited to their successful early efforts for the formation of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party in April 1927. Association of Bhag Singh 'Canadian' with the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party exercised a decisive influence on the evolution of its ideology. It accounted for its devotion to the Ghadr ideals of

50. D. Petrie, *Communism in India 1924-27* (Compiled in the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India), p. 263.

51. Home Department, Political, File No. 44/36, 1934, pp. 15, 18.

52. *Ibid.* In his statement, Harjap Singh deposed that his letters to the Ghadr Party in America and the *Kirti* (Amritsar) were sometimes written in Gurmukhi and sometimes in code. He stated, "...we had fixed the following numerical figures in one code, 3,6,8,7,12,9,2,4,1,11, and 5. These words were taken from the Amritsar and Washington, leaving the vowels aside and the letters were then given the members by showing one letter each under each numerical figure and afterwards those letters were written in the order of numerical figures. The letter thus written could be deciphered in the same way by writing each letter under the numerical figures allotted as above."

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

equality and complete independence. Moreover, militant spirit of the Ghadrities and example of their fight against national bondage, injustice and inequality—social, economic and political—enabled the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party to evolve its own genre of militant nationalism. Mass-action was given priority and terrorism was put aside as the last resort to be used against the bureaucrats and reactionaries.

By 1930's the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party had acquired so much organisational strength and ideological hold over peasants and workers that it was capable of chartering its own course. In the latter half of 1930's, when the party embarked upon its programme of action, the Ghadr emissaries had perforce to shed the role of mentors. The prominent among them such as Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhag Singh 'Canadian,' Rattan Singh 'American' and Harjap Singh were either dead or behind the bars.

Another cause for the gradual eclipse of their influence was the increasing indifference of the Communist International to the continuation of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties in India; the Ghadr emissaries, who had trusted the Communist International as a guide, felt bewildered over the change in its policy. Furthermore, forcible cessation of the publication of the *Kirti*, the stronghold of the Ghadr Group, eroded their control over the Peasants' and Workers' movement in this region. Declaration of the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party as unlawful in 1933 reduced chance of keeping up rapport with the Punjab Kirti-Kisan leaders who themselves were serving sentences in the Meerut Conspiracy Case.

Moreover, the emphasis shifted to Kisan agitation between 1935-39. The district Kisan Committee in Amritsar, Jullundur and Lyallpur, which were actively organising agitation for the abolition of *hasiat* tax and *begar*, professional tax and reduction in land-revenue, threw up new leaders known as "Babas."

To sum up, the Punjab Kirti-Kisan Party survived in spite of repression and reprisals for it had acquired an independent identity; it assumed new forms in response to the changing political situation.

## Famines—Popular Reaction and the British Attitude During Later-half of the Nineteenth Century

NAVTEJ SINGH\*

Famines had been a recurring phenomenon under the Colonial era. These were not the product of natural factors alone but also of drought situations being converted into severe famines because of the policies of the Colonists.<sup>1</sup> During the period under review the province of Punjab was afflicted by five major famines and two severe scarcities.<sup>2</sup> The natural outcome of such calamities was the rise in prices of foodgrains which generally rose to atleast thrice their normal value.<sup>3</sup> The rise in prices of food arising out of shortage of foodgrains caused widespread hardships and gave birth to numerous problems, such as rise in crime,<sup>4</sup> robberies, dacoities and grain riots.<sup>5</sup> Before the harvest when the grain stocks of the poor peasants were exhausted and opportunities of work limited, thefts of standing crops were common. When prices

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1. For detailed information about Punjab Famines and their origin, etc., see Navtej Singh, *Famines in the Punjab, 1858-1901*, Ph.D. Thesis, Department of History, P.U., Chandigarh, 1986.
2. *Ibid.*, These were the famines of 1860-61, 1868-70, 1877-78, 1896-97, 1899-1900 and scarcities of 1883-84 and 1890-91.
3. *Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1880*, Part III, Para 11.
4. The crime rate in Punjab always increased during famine years when compared with normal years :

Year	No. of offences	Year	No. of offences	Year	No. of offences
1859	46,918	1876	92,572	1895	1,84,060
1860*	47,195	1877*	94,926	1896*	1,92,652
1861*	54,094	1878*	1,00,645	1897*	1,87,084
1867	49,403	1879	1,01,421	1898	1,74,221
1868*	69,500	1882	1,20,536	1899*	1,81,965
1869*	75,325	1883*	1,23,756	1900*	1,80,746
1870*	73,224	1884*	1,27,927	1901	1,72,821

(\*Famine years in the Punjab)

Source : *Punjab Criminal Justice Reports* for the relevant years.

5. There occurred a number of grain riots during different famines in the Punjab which have been discussed further in the paper.

ruled high grain was regularly stolen from threshing floors, granaries and railway depots and frequently from moving trains.<sup>6</sup>

While petty thefts could often be the compulsive outcome of hunger pangs, crowd actions and grain riots were the product of a more complex set of pressures—social, cultural, economic. If price rise was caused by droughts and harvest failures, people were not always driven to collective action. Since their sufferings appeared unavoidable, natural, there was often a quiet acceptance of fate. But when high prices followed a good harvest scarcity appeared unnatural. If it was obvious to the consumers that traders were making profit by manipulating prices and hoarding, then distress became intolerable, and its removal seemed humanly feasible. In such a context price rise provoked collective outrage.<sup>7</sup>

When price rise and scarcity were caused by exports, grain riots were common. During the famine of 1877-78, the distressed people in Rohtak district plundered grain-carts and finally the *bazar* at Badli was attacked and gutted by the Jats of the place. About 40 shopkeepers were looted of property, principally grain, to the value of Rs. 36,000. The police took the persons in custody, many of them were women.<sup>8</sup> Similar riots were reported from Ambala during this famine which were the result of high prices caused by export of foodgrains.<sup>9</sup> In Gujranwala district instances occurred of the villagers preventing exports of grain although no riot was reported in October 1877.<sup>10</sup>

During the famine of 1896-97, the situation became so critical that riots at many places took place. In Delhi and Multan people had gone so far to assert that the Deputy Commissioners ordered the famine-stricken inhabitants to loot the grain-shops. In another case a *kotha* (store-house) of grain belonging to a *shahukar* (moneylender)

6. *Police Report, 1878*, p. xvi, 1891, p. xLiv.

7. Neeladri Bhattacharya, *Agrarian change in Punjab, 1880-1940*, Ph.D. Thesis, JNU, New Delhi, 1985, p. 44.

8. Copy of a letter No. 145 of the 15th September, 1877, from *The Comm. & Supdt., Hissar Div.*, to *The Secy. to Govt., Punjab*; *Progs. P.W.D.*, *Famine*, B, Dec., 1877, No. 12.

9. *Letter No. 545A*, dated Lahore, 30th April, 1878, from *C.L. Tupper, Esq., Under-Secy. to Govt. Pb. to The Secy. to G.O.I., Deptt. of Rev., Ag. & Comm.*, vide *Punjab Famine Report, 1878-79*, Vol. I, p. 35.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 37

was looted in the Gujranwala district.<sup>11</sup> In Delhi, a few grain-dealers closed their shops for a few hours under some apprehension of disturbance.<sup>12</sup> At Rawalpindi about 60 sepoys, chiefly Pathans, attacked bankers and other shops in *bazar* for purposes of loot. The Government ordered shooting in which four persons were injured.<sup>13</sup> In Ferozepure during 1896-97 famine starving poor people were compelled to take to plundering and the owners of the grain-stores asked for a military guard to prevent a disturbance.<sup>14</sup> In Rawalpindi the famine-stricken people took to plunder with the result that some of them were beaten to death by the Police.<sup>15</sup>

However, the feelings of the people are well reflected in a vernacular newspaper, *Mulla Do Piazza*: "If famines are due to failure of rain or some other calamity of a similar nature, the people would patiently endure it, but they cannot help feeling angry when they knew that it is simply caused by the export of wheat to England."<sup>16</sup>

In 1891, despite a good harvest grain prices soared due to massive exports. There was a general outcry and continuous demands for a ban against exports. "If measures to control price rise were not undertaken," warned the *Lahore Gazette* "the people will be goaded to desperation and will lose all regard for maintenance of peace and order in the country where they find that they must either die of starvation or go to jail. Robberies, thefts and dacoities are already the order of the day."<sup>17</sup>

The *Koh-i-Noor* complained that "foodgrains are selling at famine prices, and that if the Government goes on treating the matter with indifference the people will be compelled to commit crime...The people have been reduced to great straits and are bitterly

11. *The Paisa Akhbar* (Lahore), 26th Sept., 1896; *Selections from the Native Newspapers published in the Punjab, etc. during 1896*. Hereafter noted as *SNNPP*; Letter No. 46 from Viceroy to Queen Empress, dated Oct. 7, 1896, *Elgin Papers*, M.F. Reel No. 1.
12. Letter No. 46, from Viceroy to Queen Empress, dated Oct. 7, 1896, *Elgin Papers*, M.F. Reel No. 1.
13. Telegram No. 15, 29th Nov., 1896, from Viceroy to Queen Empress, *Elgin Papers*, M.F. Reel No. 1.
14. *The Kaisri Akhbar* (Jullundur), 16th Oct., 1896; *SNNPP* during 1896.
15. *The Taj-ul-Akhbar* (Rawalpindi), 9th January, 1897; *SNNPP* during 1897.
16. *Mulla-Do-Piazza* (Lahore) dated 25th April, 1891; *SNNPP* during the year 1891.
17. *Lahore Gazette* (Lahore), 25th April, 1891; *SNNPP* during the year 1891.

complaining against such indifference on the part of the Government."<sup>18</sup> Withholding of stocks at a time of scarcity and hunger violated popular notions of justice and arbitrary fixation of prices by the dealers was unacceptable particularly in times of crisis. The public opinion is well reflected in the Newspapers. For example, *Gham-khwar-i-Hind* was "at a loss to understand why the dealers should be allowed to fix the prices of grain to suit their own convenience."<sup>19</sup> *The Aftab-i-Punjab*, emphasised : "Undoubtedly the freedom of traders is a good thing in ordinary times, but in times of scarcity it is by no means wise to leave the market to the whims of grain-dealers."<sup>20</sup>

*The Ashraf-ul-Akhbar* urged the Government to fix the price of grain at moderate rate and prevent *baniahs* from raising prices.<sup>21</sup> In each crisis and price rise there were similar demands for justice and government mediation. After the terrible famine of 1899-1900, a good *rabi* harvest was expected in 1901. When the *baniahs* continued to raise prices the consumers grumbled : "The grain-dealers have affected a combination with the object of robbing the people and what is worse there is no one to prevent them doing so. Government should, therefore, move in the matter and devise means to put a stop to this deplorable state of affairs."<sup>22</sup> Thus, social indignation and moral outrages led to complaints and then a demand from the local authorities for active intervention to control grain movement and fix the price. When the expectation of justice frustrated, crowd action then followed.<sup>23</sup> In most cases of grain riots and bazar looting, one can observe this familiar sequence. But a timely gesture on the part of the authorities could restrain or moderate any outburst.

For example, mention may be made of the situation in the summer of 1873 when prices had doubled within a month in June and a general tension was building up.<sup>24</sup> What incensed people was not

18. *The Koh-i-Noor* (Lahore), dated 9th April, 1891 ; *Ibid.*

19. *Gham-khwar-i-Hind* (Lahore), 19th December, 1891 ; *SNNPP* during the year 1891.

20. *Aftab-i-Punjab* (Lahore), dated 19th December, 1891 ; *Ibid.*

21. *Ashraf-ul Akhbar* (Delhi), 1st May, 1891 ; See also, *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* (Jhelum), 4th May, 1891 ; *Delhi Punch* (Lahore), 1st May, 1891 ; *Akhbar-i-Kesri* (Jullundur), 19th December, 1891 ; *SNNPP* during 1891.

22. *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* (Jhelum), 21st January, 1901 ; *SNNPP* during 1901.

23. Neeladri, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

24. *Division Records, Ambala*, 1873, File No. 17.

the rise in price but the action of the traders. Anticipating scarcity the traders were withholding stocks, pushing prices up and violating agreed norms of marketing. The traders were expected to sell at a rate fixed by themselves and recorded at the kotwali every morning as the 'price current'.<sup>25</sup> But traders turned the practice into a mock affair. On 28th June, for instance, they fixed the rate of wheat at 18 or 19 seers/rupee. Then without any formal change in this agreed rate, began selling wheat at 15 or 16 seers/rupee.<sup>26</sup> On hearing numerous complaints and apprehending 'disturbance' the bazar Chaudhary was forced to intervene. It was proclaimed by a beat of tom tom that the bazar rate could not exceed the rate announced by the *Kotwali* every morning.<sup>27</sup> In situations like this official actions could often avert a possible grain riot.

Colonial officials feared sharp price fluctuations. Long term rise was associated with peasant prosperity but sudden dramatic inflation was seen as a sign of alarm. With scarcity, migration and mortality rates increased, so did the possibilities of social or agrarian disturbance and criminal activity. These posed not only administrative and political problems but strained the financial resources of the state. Expenditure on relief was needed precisely when revenue collections dropped. So officials watched with concern. The police department in particular kept a careful track of price movements. The fear of riots and revolts conditioned in many ways official reactions.

To check the agrarian or social disturbance or revolt, the British concern was to watch the development of the situation, and when it felt that it was becoming critical, at that juncture the Government geared its machinery and initiated some relief measures which usually included relief works, gratuitous relief, suspensions and remissions of revenue demand and provision of *taqavi* loans to the peasants and the other poor. These measures, however, were never adequate, but were sufficient to contain the public discontentment against the existing system. Hence the British officials were very keen in judging the results of the relief afforded, it indicates their ideology of concern. These reflections are clear from the following reports. Reviewing the revolts of the relief operations in Karnal during the

25. No. 261, *Cantonement Magistrate, Ambala to Comm. & Supdt., Ambala Division*; *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

famine of 1896-97, the Deputy Commissioner observed, "The disposition of the people as regards relief measures was one of intense gratitude, and it would be hard to exaggerate the political effect these measures produced. This is the opinion of the every European Officer in the district in contact with the people. *Sarkar Ne Zillah Ko Basaya* was on every tongue."<sup>28</sup>

The Deputy Commissioner of Lahore reported that "the people generally have shown themselves grateful for the assistance rendered to them. Expressions of loyalty and goodwill to Government are not wanting among the Zamindar class."<sup>29</sup>

The Deputy Commissioner of Gujrat Sardar Muhammed Afzal Khan wrote : "The people are grateful to Sarkar for the relief measures taken to help them. The kindness and generosity shown by the Government to the people has been very beneficial. The people say that "Sarkar is their *ma bap* and is ready to help them in their troubles."<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, during the famine of 1899-1900, it was reported that "everywhere it is recorded that the people were much impressed by what was done for them and grateful for it. Absolute confidence in Government appears to have been shown by all classes from the first, and it is certain that a great political effect was produced by the measures instituted in the famine of 1896-97 and that it has been intensified by what has now been done."<sup>31</sup>

The Deputy Commissioner of Karnal reported that the relief measures as a whole were keenly appreciated by the people, especially by the Jats. They were continually expressing their gratitude and comparing the management in British to the chaos in native territory."<sup>32</sup>

From Rohtak it was reported that throughout the famine people thoroughly understood that Government was responsible to help them and as the distress grew more acute and the difficulties experienced

28. *Report on the Famine in the Punjab, 1896-97*, para 50, p. 28 (Lahore, The Punjab Govt. Press, 1898).

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Report on the Punjab Famine of 1899-1900*, Vol. I, para 78, pp. 35-36 (Lahore, Punjab Govt. Press, 1901).

32. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, para 39, p. 38.



greater and yet overcome more or less, so grew the gratitude in their hearts for *Sirkar*...The political effect must have been very great.<sup>33</sup>

However, the people were not always welcoming the efforts of the British Government, as the relief labourers in a few cases considered that the Government was taking advantage of the famine to get cheap labour out of them.<sup>34</sup>

The Deputy Commissioner from Ferozepure reported : "I do not think that the people full understood the motives of Government in regard to relief measures except perhaps in Moga. There seemed to be a hazy sort of idea that the *Sirkar* was making use of the hard times to obtain work from the people at lower wages than they did not understand the nature of the charitable relief. Gratitude for the relief granted the people never showed. As to the political effect, I doubt whether the relief measures had any in this district, and if there was any political effect it would be distinctly hostile to the Government."<sup>35</sup>

The concern of the British officials has also been reflected in regard to other measures such as remissions and suspensions of revenue. The British officials were forced to realize the problems of maintaining a rigid system of revenue collection. Haunted by the riots and revolts, many felt that the revenue burden (particularly during years of scarcity) and the phenomenon of indebtedness and land transfers accentuated rural discontent. In accordance with the suggestions of the Famine Commissions of 1880 remissions and suspensions were adopted as an integral part of the revenue policy of the state. But it was emphasized that this system of concessions was 'to be recognized as a measure purely of *grace* and not of right. The Government could use its discretion to grant them in exceptional cases of calamity to display the image of a 'benevolent' authority.<sup>36</sup> Similar considerations lay behind other policy measures, grant of *taqavi* loans, opening up of fodder reserves at the time of scarcity, or even the selective grant of *inams* and *maafis* to the loyal and faithful.<sup>37</sup>

33. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 48.

34. *Report on the Famine in the Punjab in 1896-97*, para 49, p. 28.

35. *Ibid.*, App. I, p. iv.

36. *Rev. & Ag.*, Rev., May 1905, A, No. 9, para 5.

37. Neeladri, 'Colonial State and Agrarian Society' in *situating Indian History* (Ed.), R. Thapar & S. Bhattacharaya, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, p. 134.

What emerges from the discussion is that during famines in the Punjab the popular reaction depended on the origin of the calamity. If the people were convinced that a particular calamity was the result of natural forces, they accepted it as 'fate' and never retaliated. On the other hand, if they knew that high prices were the result of exports, hoarding of stocks or artificially raised then they grumbled. Initially they took to protests and complaints but if they felt that they were being ignored then there followed a collective action in the form of grain riots. However, petty thefts, dacoities and robberies remained a common feature during the period under review. The fear of riots or social/agrarian disturbance checked the British policy of relief. To contain any 'disturbance' the Colonists took some measures to mitigate the calamity which included relief works, gratuitous relief, *taqavi* loans, suspension or remission of revenue, etc. However, these measures were never adequate to relieve the people of calamity. But it had some ideological concern. Since the officials were very keen to note down the response given by people against small relief afforded and its effects on the psychological developments among the people which generally were favourable and thus it helped to contain any widespread disturbance in the peasant society of the Punjab.

## The Individual Satyagraha Movement (1940-41) in a Punjab District (Karnal) : A Case Study

DR C.L. DATTA\*

The Individual Satyagraha Movement (1940-41) occupies quite an important place in various non-violent *Satyagraha* campaigns launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to win freedom. It was at the Ramgarh (Bihar) session on March 20, 1940 that the Congress decided to start this civil disobedience movement as a protest against the decision of the British Government for making India as a belligerent country in the Second World War without any reference to the Indians.<sup>1</sup> Karnal, before the partition of the Punjab in 1947, was an important district of the Ambala Division, which formed south-eastern part of the province. In 1966, this Division with some princely states and minor territorial changes, formed the present Haryana State. The paper is mainly based on the recently-discovered District Records which, since the pre-partition days, were kept in the offices of the Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police marked as "Secret and top confidential." Thanks to the personal interest taken by Sh. Jagdish Nehra, the then Education Minister of Haryana, these Records were acquired by the Haryana State Archives, Chandigarh in 1985 and are being shown to the researchers for the first time.

The Individual Satyagraha Movement continued for about fourteen months, i. e., from October 17, 1940 till December 31, 1941. During this period, the movement was to pass through four phases. The fundamental basis of this movement was India's dissociation from the War effort to which it was never invited to be party.<sup>2</sup> Mahatama

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1. For details about Resolution of the Indian National Congress at Ramgarh session, see, C.H. Phillips, *The Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858-1947 Select Documents*, London : Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 338-39.
2. See Mahatma Gandhi's statement to the *Times of India* dated April 17, 1941. Sevagram, Wardha, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. LXXIV (April 16, October 10, 1941). The Publication Division : Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Ahmedabad, 1978, p. 3.

Gandhi wanted this campaign to be individual and not a mass civil disobedience movement like earlier movements; so its success or progress was not to be measured by calculations of arithmetical or geometrical progression.<sup>3</sup> He asked the *Satyagrahis* to sign a pledge, important part of which is reproduced below :

"We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprive a people of these rights and oppress them, the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but also based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *Puran Swaraj* or complete independence."<sup>4</sup>

The Individual Satyagraha campaign was not to be accompanied by demonstrations or holding of meetings in the cities. The person intending to perform *Satyagraha* was to inform the District Magistrate or the Police authorities of his district, about the time and place where and the manner in which it was to be offered. The *Satyagrahi* was to repeat the slogan : "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance."<sup>5</sup> Gandhi felt that this approach was "harmless, economical and effective." He further exhorted his followers not to maintain secrecy about the party funds and property. If the British Government chose to confiscate these belongings, let them do that. He remarked :

"In this life and death struggle, we must be prepared to lose all funds and other property. We must learn to depend upon the nation financing the movement from day to day. Our

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3. Pathabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of Indian National Congress*, Vol. II (1935-47), (Bombay : Padma Publication, 1947), p. 277.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

5. See Section 6 of Satyagraha Instructions issued by Mahatma Gandhi from Sevagram, Wardha, dated November 11, 1940. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. LXXIII (September 12, 1940-April 15, 1941), p. 157.

wants must, therefore, be reduced to the minimum. No one need expect monetary assistance from the Congress.”<sup>6</sup>

Further, in this movement Mahatama Gandhi desired the Congressmen to put an intensive effort in the direction of constructive work; the condition about *Khadi* and *Charkha* was a must. For holding *Satyagraha*, he instructed :

“Every Congress Committee should become a *Satyagraha* Committee and register such men who believe in the cultivation of the spirit of goodwill towards all, who have no untouchability in them in any shape or form, who would spin regularly and who habitually use *khaddar* to the exclusion of all other cloth. I would expect those who thus register the names with their committee to devote the whole of their spare time to the constructive programme.”<sup>7</sup>

Keeping in view the afore-mentioned instructions of Mahatma Gandhi, the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee (PPCC) started preparations for launching the *Satyagraha* movement in the province. It formed a *Satyagraha* Committees consisting of members of the Punjab Provincial Congress Working Committee (PPCWC) who had signed the *Satyagraha* pledge. Work for holding elections of primary and district Congress Committees was taken up; the Tehsil Congress Committees were formed for the first time. After the elections in May 1940, every new Committees was to transfer itself into a *Satyagraha* Committee. Partap Singh Kairon,<sup>8</sup> Secretary, PPCC felt that this step would facilitate the work of *Satyagraha* and would “add an impetus to the movement.”<sup>9</sup> A provincial training

6. *Ibid.*, Section 11, p. 158.

7. Sitaramayya, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

8. Partap Singh Kairon (1901-1965) was born at village Kairon, District Amritsar. He got his Master's degree from the Michigan University. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1930 and participated in various civil disobedience movements launched by this party. He held the office of the General Secretary of the PPCC from 1939 to 1946. Later he was the President of the same organisation from 1950 to 1952. From 1947 to 1956, he was Minister in the Punjab Cabinet. From 1956 to 1964, he remained the Chief Minister of the Panjab. For details, see Fauja Singh, *Eminent Freedom Fighters of Panjab* (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1972), pp. 181-82.

9. Partap Singh Kairon, General Secretary, Panjab Provincial Congress Committee (PPCC) to Secretary All India Congress Committee (AICC), letter dated May 24, 1940. AICC File No. G-28 (pt. 2), 1940, p. 14 (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (abbreviated hereafter as NMML), New Delhi.

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camp for *Satyagrahis* was held at Lahore from May 23 to May 30, 1940 which was inaugurated by Jawahar Lal Nehru. In the camp discourses on problems before the country were delivered and it also discussed how the constructive programme was to be carried. Prominent Congressmen also toured different districts to enlist new party members and also collected thousands of Rupees for the Satyagraha Fund.<sup>10</sup>

As directed by the central leadership, the PPCC also took many steps to popularise *Khadi* and constructive work of the Congress. The Charkha Department was established with a view to popularise spinning; the use of *Khadi* was emphasised as a step towards self-reliance.<sup>11</sup> All India Spinners Association (Punjab Branch) utilised the services of Miss Miran Behn in conjunction with some District and Primary Congress Committees to push the sale of *Khadi* in the Province.<sup>12</sup> In order to remove untouchability and for the uplift of Harijans, two new Departments, i.e., Harijan Department and Minorities Department were also established in the Punjab.<sup>13</sup>

## II

The British authorities could not view with equanimity these proceedings of the Indian National Congress. They felt that the Congress Party by starting this movement intended to embarrass the Central and Provincial Governments in their efforts to achieve victory in the War. The Government of India regarded the Individual Satyagraha campaign as a grave danger to the peace and tranquility of the country and determined to crush it with a firm hand. Soon after the starting of the movement, the British Indian Government issued an Emergency Powers Ordinance that gave very wide powers to Governments and their officers.<sup>14</sup> Section 3 of this Ordinance empower-

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10. *The Tribune* (Lahore), January 4 and 25, 1941 and March 19, 1941.

11. *AICC File G 5 (pt. I)*, 1940, pp. 303, 305. Letter from Ram Kishan, General Secretary, PPCC to General Secretary, AICC, Camp Wardha dated August 15, 1940 (NMML).

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. J.D. Penny, Chief Secretary, Punjab Government to all Deputy Commissioners (D.Cs.) in the Punjab, letter No. 11856-11884-F.D.S.B. dated October 31, 1940. *D.C. Office Rohtak, Records (Confidential)*, F. No. H/40, p. 3.

ed District Magistrates "to direct the arrest without warrant of any person regarding whom there are reasonable grounds for believing that he has engaged, is engaging, or is about to engage in any revolutionary activity, a term which has a wide definition in Ordinance."<sup>15</sup>

In the Punjab, the Government was led by Premier Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, leader of the Unionist Party, who was quite loyal to the British. Unlike other eight provinces<sup>16</sup> in the country, where the Ministries resigned in protest against making India a party to the war, the Unionist Government passed the following resolution in the Punjab Legislative Assembly on November 6, 1939 :

"This Assembly approved of the Punjab Government towards the present international crisis in condemning Nazi and Fascist aggression and declared its determination to resist this aggression and to protect the security and honour of the Punjab and India with all available resources of the Province..."<sup>17</sup>

The Punjab Government landed on the civil-resisters with a heavy hand. It decided to give them exemplary punishments ; front rank leaders were to be sentenced for two years and persons of importance in the Congress hierarchy were to be sentenced for eighteen months, and the sentences were to be progressively scaled down as the importance of the individual diminished.<sup>18</sup> The Government also prepared a list of prominent Congress "agitators" of the province whose arrests were to be effected by the Superintendents of Police on receipt of a code telegram "APAOL," signifying "Arrest Prominent Agitators of List."<sup>19</sup>

The Government, realising that any civil disobedience campaign depended largely on publicity, took steps to prevent the publication of news regarding the movement which had not been passed by the press authorities in New Delhi. All the Deputy Commissioners were

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15. *Ibid.*, Letter No. 3-7616-44-F.D.S.B. dated September 14, 1940, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

16. These Provinces were: Assam, Bihar, Orissa, C.P., Bombay, Madras, North-West Frontier Province and Sind.

17. *Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates* (November 1939), Vol. I, No. 8, p. 593.

18. Chief Secretary, Punjab Government to all D.Cs. in Punjab, letter No. B(12)33/14431-59-B.D.S.B. dated November 22, 1940, *Ibid.*, p. 2.

19. Deputy Inspector-General of Police, C.I.D. Punjab to all S.Ps. in Punjab. No. B. 7650-78, S.D.S.B. dated September 21, 1940, *Ibid.*, p. 2.

directed to take sufficient steps for not allowing publication of any unauthorised news in the Newspapers of their Districts. They were also advised to see that after the Congressmen were taken into custody "They should not be allowed to make public statements or receive demonstrations from their friends nor should social relations continue with officials."<sup>20</sup> However, if arrests were courted in areas where there was a strong feeling against the Congress, if possible, the "Civil Disobedience may be prolonged, so that there may be hostile demonstrations."<sup>21</sup> At least in the Ambala Division, where the ruling Unionist Party led by Sir Chhotu Ram, the Development Minister, was quite popular, the Government expected anti-Congress demonstrations.

The District authorities were advised to remain in touch with the trend of public opinion in their districts, and use different agencies at their disposal to the correction or contradiction of false rumours set afloat by the "instruments of Congress." Among these agencies were: the Publicity sub-Committee of District War board, Local Newspapers and friendly speakers. While impressing upon them the value and importance of early publicity of facts, the Deputy Commissioners were asked to report, if necessary by "CYPHER TELEGRAM" any events or rumours about the Congress campaign which called for special counter-measures.<sup>22</sup>

The Government also decided about the classification of political prisoners. M.L.As. and persons belonging to very well-to-do families who had not been convicted of earlier, were to be put in 'A' class, whereas those "who by social status, education or habit of life have been accustomed to a superior mode of living," were to be given 'B' class. All others were to be placed in 'C' class.<sup>23</sup> Prisoners placed in two higher classes, enjoyed better facilities in the Jail.

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20. Chief Secretary, Punjab Government to all D.Cs. in Punjab, letter No. B(12)33/14735-63-B.D.S.B. dated November 29, 1940 *D.C. Office Rohtak Records (Secret)*, F. No. F/40, p. 21.

21. Letter No. 14127-55-B.D.S.B. *D.C. Office Rohtak Records (Confid.)* F. No. F/40, p. 11, *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

23. F.C. Bourne, Home Secretary, Punjab Government to all D.Cs. letter No. 5806-fl-40/51211 dated December 13, 1940, F. No. H/40, pp. 43, 45.



## III

Now, we turn to discuss cases of twelve *Satyagrahis* from Karnal District about whom some details are available. However, it may be mentioned that due to inadequate information forthcoming from the available sources, it is not possible to trace out, phase-wise, the progress of the Individual Satyagraha Movement in Karnal District. Nor it is possible to say as to what was the exact number of the *Satyagrahis* who were imprisoned during this period.<sup>24</sup> But, this is clear that it was after November 17, 1940 when the Individual Satyagraha Movement was replaced by Representative Satyagraha, and when rank and file of the Congress party courted arrest that most of the persons were convicted and prosecuted.

Dr R. Krishna, dentist of Panipat, was sentenced on December 5, 1940 for six months rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 50/- as fine under the Defence of India Rules, for his anti-war activities. Dr Krishna's father was a retired Assistant Engineer; his uncle was an Assistant Surgeon, who had also officiated as Civil Surgeon; his real brother was S.D.O. in the canal Department. Dr Krishna was a Matriculate and his monthly income was about Rs. 150/-.<sup>25</sup> He was classified as 'B' class prisoner.

Man Singh (aged 33 years) S/o Ram Singh, President, DDC, Karnal, was sentenced on January 29, 1941 to rigorous imprisonment for 9 months for offering *Satyagraha* and delivering a speech in the Sarafa Bazar in Karnal city on January 28, 1941. In his speech Man Singh said that to give help of any sort in the present war was a sin (*haram*); "to give or become recruits for the army is to help the British and so it is also a sin, and to give subscriptions of any sort for help in this war is also a sin (i.e., *haram*)."<sup>26</sup> Proceedings of this meeting were recorded by Shamsuddin, Head Constable, who became Primary witness No. 1. During prosecution Man Singh admitted that "it was his intention to prejudice the success of the financial

24. K.C. Yadav (*Haryana Ka Itihas*) (Hindi), Jullundur City: S. Parmod and Co. 1975, p. 233) says that the total number of arrests was 36; Jagdish Chandra, *Freedom Struggle in Haryana*, Kurukshetra, Vishal Publications, 1982, p. 110), puts the total number of arrests to 48. S.P. Shukla (*India's Freedom Struggle and the Role of Haryana*, New Delhi, Deep and Deep Publication, 1985, pp. 98, 103-04, 106, 115 dt. seq) writes that the total number of those who were prosecuted and convicted was 72.

25. D.C. Office, Karnal Records, F. No. SVI (E), Vol. 2, p. 11.

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measures taken or arrangements made by Government with a view to the efficient prosecution of war and to prejudice recruiting persons for service in the army, etc." Later on Man Singh had said that he did all this in accordance with the scheme of the Indian National Congress.<sup>26</sup>

Man Singh had studied upto 9th class and was a tailor with daily income of about Rs. one. He had some assistants also at his shop. He was resident of Nabha State and settled at Karnal since the 5th September, 1931. Man Singh did not possess any movable or immovable property in Karnal city and none of his relatives held any post in Government service. He was classified as 'B' class prisoner.<sup>27</sup> However, on being pointed out by Waryam Singh, Superintendent Police, Karnal, that Man Singh was not highly educated and was a man of ordinary status, his 'B' class was changed into 'C' class.<sup>28</sup>

Basho Ram (aged 24 years) S/o Jitu Mal, President Tehsil Congress Committee, Karnal, was sentenced on January 21, 1941 to rigorous imprisonment for eight months under the Defence of India Rules offering *Satyagraha* in a meeting held at Chaura Bazar in Karnal city on January 30, 1941. In the meeting, he also delivered a speech in which he advised the people not to give subscriptions for the war and not to give or become recruits in the army. Sayyad Tasa wwar Hussain and Munshi Ram Lambardar deposed as witness. Basho Ram was a Mahajan, literate and a News Agent, i.e. supplier of Newspapers and Magazines. He was classified 'B' class prisoner.<sup>29</sup> Here it may not be out of place to mention that in 1932 when Basho Ram was about fifteen years old, he participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by the Indian National Congress. For this, on February 23, 1932 he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment of four months and fine of Rs. 25.<sup>30</sup>

However, Khan Sahib Chaudhary Ghulam Mus tafa, District Magistrate, Karnal, now in the case of Basho Ram did not agree with the convicting court (Lala Rattan Chand Grover, Magistrate First

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20, 31.

28. See letter dated February 3, 1941 from Waryam Singh, S.P. Karnal to Khan Sahib Chaudhry Ghulam Mustafa, D.C. Karnal, *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 17-18, 21.

29. See judgement dated January 31, 1941, Crown Versus Basho Ram, son of Jitu Mal Mahajan of Karnal, *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26, 33.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Class, Karnal) to grant 'B' class status to the accused. The District Magistrate observed that, Basho Ram being a News Agent could not earn about Rs. 2/8/-daily in a small place like Karnal, where there were other News Agents also. Basho Ram was also not a man of much influence or position. He or his family did not possess any movable or immovable property. The Khan Sahib, while recommending 'C' class to the accused, further observed that "placing a man of his position in 'B' class would be definitely putting a premium on and encouraging Anti-War propaganda and sedition."<sup>31</sup> But the Governor of the Punjab upheld the 'B' class status given to Basho Ram by the convicting court.<sup>32</sup>

Pandit Madho Ram, President City Congress Committee, Panipat, was sentenced on January 1, 1941 to nine months rigorous imprisonment and Rs. 50/- fine for his anti-British propaganda. Madho Ram was a Graduate and Banker and had no previous conviction. His father was a well-to-do Banker of Panipat. One of his brothers was a practising pleader at Panipat. The family paid Rs. 300/- as income tax and Rs. 1000/- land revenue annually. He was classified as 'B' class prisoner.<sup>33</sup> However, in his case, the Governor of the Punjab, changed his classification from 'B' class to 'A' class prisoner.<sup>34</sup>

Mohammad Hussain (aged 42 years), General Secretary of the District Congress Committee, Karnal, was prosecuted under the Defence of India Rules and sentenced to 8 months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 25/-. He had offered *Satyagraha* in a meeting on February 4, 1941 held in the bazar near Gholak in Karnal city and delivered a speech in which he said that "to give help of any kind in the war was *haram* and to give subscriptions for this war is a great sin and *haram* and to give or become recruits for the army for the war was *haram, haram, haram*, i.e., thrice sinful." Tasawwar Hussain,

31. See letter dated February 11, 1941 from District Magistrate, Karnal to D. C. Karnal, No. 1318 dated February 13, 1941, *Ibid.*, p. 35.

32. Cf. V.B. Stainton, Deputy Secretary, Punjab Government, Home Department to District Magistrate, Karnal, letter No. J1-41/12696 dated March 7, 1941, *Ibid.*, p. 67.

33. See judgement dated January 30, 1941, Crown Versus Pt. Madho Ram, President, City Congress Committee, Panipat, District Karnal, *Ibid.*, pp. 9-13.

34. From Deputy Secretary, Punjab Government, Home Department to D.C. Karnal, letter No. 917-J1-41/12480 dated March 6, 1941, *Ibid.*, p. 73.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT (1940-41) IN KARNAL DISTRICT

Sub-Inspector and Farzand Ali, *Safedposh*, who were present in the meeting gave witness. Mohammad Hussain was a literate and could read and write Urdu and had passed the primary examination. He was a casual offender and had no previous conviction. He had been doing shop-keeping, building contracts at various times and had earned a good deal. He was related to Ch. Mohammad Yahya Khan, B. A., Junior, Vice-Chairman, District Board, Karnal. He was classified as a 'B' class prisoner.<sup>35</sup> However, later, on the recommendation of the Deputy Commissioner, his classification was changed from 'B' to 'C' by the Governor of the Panjab.<sup>36</sup>

Pandit Ram Sarup, President Congress Committee, Hathwala,<sup>37</sup> Tehsil Panipat, was sentenced on March 15, 1941 to six months of rigorous imprisonment for offering *Satyagraha* at Samalkha Mandi in a Congress meeting held on March 14, 1941. In the meeting, he also delivered a speech exhorting the audience (about 200 persons) not to aid the Government in the prosecution of the war in the form of men and money. Ram Sarup was classified as a casual offender; he was a Matriculate and was working as a teacher in the District Board School at Bapoli. He was then living with his father who was a Landlord and owned 80/90 *Bighas* of land. One of his relatives also owned considerable landed property. He was classified as 'B' class prisoner.<sup>38</sup>

Banarsi Dass, a Saraf and Land-owner of Thanesar, was prosecuted under the Defence of India Rules by the Butana Police Station. About him it was alleged that on April 4, 1941 in a meeting held at about 4 p.m. in Birthal under the auspices of the Congress, he delivered a speech in the course of which he said to the public that they should not give subscription at all to the Government for the war. Patwari Banke Ram attended the meeting and took down notes of the speech of the accused. Bashir Ahmad, Confidential Clerk to the Superintendent of Police, Karnal also deposed as a Government witness. In this

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 53-54, 63, 65, 177, 181, 183, 185.

36. See judgement *Crown Versus Mohammad Hussain*, son of Fateh Mohammad Rajput of Jundla, Tehsil Karnal. Letter from Home Secretary, Punjab Government to D.C. Karnal, No. S-VI-E/12-B (Vol. V) dated February 21, 1942. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

37. Hathwala is situated about ten kilometres from Samalkha.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 81, 83-85.

case, the convicting court, i.e., Ratan Chand Grover, Magistrate First Class, Karnal, observed in his judgement that the object of the accused was to court arrest and then get publicity ; therefore, "to give him a sentence of imprisonment would be to give him exactly what he wants and to bestow a halo of martyrdom on him. On the other hand a sentence of fine would defeat his object and make him feel that he was indulging in a costly business."<sup>39</sup> So, Banarsi Das, unlike other political detainees, was tried under rule 38 of the Defence of India Rules and sentenced to pay a fine of Rs. 500/ and in default of payment of fine to undergo rigorous imprisonment for 8 months.<sup>40</sup>

Vishnu Datt, a member of the Tarori Town Congress Committee, Tehsil Karnal, was sentenced on March 26, 1941 to 6 months rigorous imprisonment and to pay fine of Rs. 100/- or in default of payment of fine to undergo further rigorous imprisonment for two months for offering *Satyagraha* and anti-war propaganda. Vishnu Datt was an ordinary Zamindar and businessman. His income was about Rs. 2,000/- annum. Details about him and his social status were verified by Nur Mohammad Zaildar. He was classified 'B' class prisoner.<sup>41</sup>

Lala Har Sarup, Banker, Karnal, who was President of the Karnal City Congress Committee, was sentenced on April 1, 1941 to six months rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 200/- for his anti-government activities. He belonged to a rich family of Karnal and did banking business. He was vice-President of the Municipal Committee, Karnal for some time, paid Rs. 150 to 200/- per annum as income tax and Rs. 50/- per annum as land revenue, kept a car and had passed the Matriculation Examination of the Panjab University.<sup>42</sup> Here it may not be irrelevant to point out that earlier too Har Sarup participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement for which he was convicted on March 1, 1932 and sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment and to pay a fine of Rs. 100/- and in default to undergo a further rigorous imprisonment for two months. He was, however, acquitted by the High Court on a revision petition.<sup>43</sup>

39. Cf. judgement dated April 28, 1941, *Crown Versus Banarsi Dass Saraf of Thanesar*, District Karnal, *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 137.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

43. *Ibid.*

#### THE INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT (1940-41) IN KARNAL DISTRICT

Lala Ishwar Chander (aged 28 years), Hand Writing Expert, Karnal, offered *Satyagraha* at Village Manana on March 28, 1941. In the Congress meeting held on that day, the accused delivered a speech<sup>44</sup> exhorting the audience not to contribute men or money for the prosecution of the war. Sub-Inspector Amir Chand recorded his speech and Chaudhary Dharam Singh and Rati Ram appeared as Witness. Ishwar Chander was arrested and challaned under the Defence of India Rules. He was sentenced to eight months rigorous imprisonment. His father was a well-to-do man. Ishwar Chander was a Graduate from Delhi University and worked as Hand-writing Expert. His income was more than Rs. 100/- per month.<sup>45</sup> It may be relevant to mention here that in June 1940, Ishwar Chander was sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment under the Defence of India Rules for anti-British and anti-war propaganda.<sup>46</sup>

Lala Rughunath Sahai of Mandi Samalkha, Tehsil Panipat was sentenced to six months of rigorous imprisonment as 'B' class prisoner for offering *Satyagraha* on April 6, 1941. Rughunath Sahai's father owned about 250 *Bighas* of land and 8 to 10 shops in Samalkha Mandi; he also contributed Rs. 100/- for the War Purpose Fund on Nov. 12, 1940. Rughunath Sahai worked with his father at the shop in Samalkha Mandi. He had passed the Anglo-Vernacular Middle Examination.<sup>46</sup>

Chandgi Ram alias Chander Kirti (aged 40 years), Secretary, Panipat Tehsil Congress Committee, and a cycle dealer of Samalkha, was sentenced on April 30, 1941 to one year's rigorous imprisonment as 'B' class prisoner for making anti-government speeches. Beru Singh Lambardar of Samalkha deposed as a Government witness. Chandgi Ram was an educated youngman; he had passed the Bhushan Examination in Hindi and had also studied upto the 9th class. For six years, he was a teacher in Seth Balak Ram High School at Panipat.

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44. See judgement dated March 29, 1941, Crown *Versus* Lala Ishwar Chander, Hand Writing Expert, Karnal, *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 121, 123, 125.

45. *Jalla Wattan* (Urdu Weekly), Gaziabad, June 19, 1940.

46. See judgement dated April 4, 1941, Crown *Versus* Rughunath Sahai of Mandi Samalkha, District Karnal, *D.C. Office, Karnal Records*, F. No. SVI(E), Vol. 2, pp. 109, 117, 126.

47. See judgement dated April 30, 1941 Crown *Versus* Chandgi Ram alias Chander Kirti, Cycle dealer of Samalkha, District Karnal, *Ibid.*, pp. 157-58, 161, 167.

He owned a cycle shop at Samalkha and his living was above the average.<sup>47</sup> While awarding maximum punishment of rigorous imprisonment for one year, Magistrate first class, Karnal thus wrote in the judgement.<sup>48</sup>

"During the last two months he has made as many as seven speeches at various places - in Samalkha Police Station, in support of the Satyagraha movement. The movement in this *ilqa* is on crescendo and substantial sentence is called for to check the progress of the movement. The accused is consequently sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment."

The afore-mentioned one dozen cases of political prisoners of district Karnal who participated in the Individual Satyagraha Movement may be considered as a sample; from these cases we get some details about *Satyagrahis*' parentage, residence, profession and social status. Many of them belonged to well-do families, where as others belonged to the middle class and poor families. There were bankers, land-lords, businessmen, shopkeepers and teachers. They belonged to all the communities-Hindus, Sikhs and Mohammadans and hailed from cities, towns and villages; they felt as belonging to one nation. All of them were literates, although some of them possessed good academic qualifications. Generally speaking, these cases also show that while the older generation was loyal to the British and paid income tax and land revenue, sympathy for the Congress existed among the younger generation. The sons openly propagated the Congress policies and defied their fathers who, often, were Government servants.

Further, a close study of these cases reveal that before their arrests, they made highly patriotic speeches. As enjoined by Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders, they exhorted their countrymen not to help the British in the prosecution of the War which was being fought without the consent of the Indians. They repeatedly said that to aid the alien government with men and money was *haram*, *haram* and *haram*. For this they were convicted for sedition and other offences under the Defence of India Rules. *Sufedposhes*, *Lambardars*, *Patwaris* and petty police officials appeared witness on

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48. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-58.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA MOVEMENT (1940—41) IN KARNAL DISTRICT

the side of the Government and the magistracy deliberately sentenced them to rigorous imprisonments and imposed upon them heavy fines although their offences were formal and symbolic in character. Yet, they bore all these hardships with a smiling face, and they could not be deterred from the path which they had chosen. After the Individual Satyagraha, they had chosen. After the Individual Satyagraha, they participated in the last struggle for freedom, i.e., the Quit India Movement with greater vigour and helped the country in winning *Puran Swaraj*.

In the end, it may be remarked that a case study like the present one, which is primarily based on the recently-discovered District Records, not only enriches our knowledge about various persons, but also adds to our information about the national struggle for freedom.



## Rehabilitation of Refugees in Pepsu

GURSHARAN SINGH\*

The starting of the riots in Calcutta was the beginning of the civil war. Unrest followed in the Punjab and massive eruption of the communal riots forced a crisis. The growing unrest, in the opinion of many, strengthened the British resolve to leave India. The communal riots made it necessary to seek by negotiation a solution satisfying Jinnah. Jinnah's proposal for partition was pushed forward. In the first instance, Jinnah demanded the whole of Punjab and Bengal for the formation of Pakistan but he was forced to accept those parts which were predominantly Muslim-inhabited. The absurd demand that both parts should be joined by a corridor was rejected.

The division of Punjab and the forcible partition of the biggest province was a task at which even well-organised government anywhere in the world would have quailed. The task of demarcation of the boundaries and the exchange of population had to be carried out by a small number of officials. The native states of Punjab had to share the problems of relief and rehabilitation of refugees in conformity with the general principles laid down by the Government of India. In response to the Maharaja of Patiala's offer to give asylum to the refugees some 25,000 refugees came to Patiala between March and July 1947, almost entirely from Rawalpindi and N.W.F.P. Another 25,000 came later.<sup>1</sup> All these were accommodated in a number of camps and private and public buildings, where shelter, food, clothing and medical aid were provided and arrangements made for the education of the young. A considerable portion of the expenditure on the refugees was incurred by the Government; but the public also contributed Rs. 3,18,000/-.<sup>2</sup> A total of Rs. 16,50,000 was spent till the end of February 1948.<sup>3</sup> A fair amount of relief work was also done by the other convenanting states. As a result of partition an estimated number between eight and

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1. Bhide, M.R.; *Progress of Rehabilitation in Patiala and E.P.S. Union*, 1951, Patiala Director of Publicity, pp. 2-4.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

3. *Ibid.*

nine lakhs Muslims left from their convenanting states, as against this about three lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs came to the Union by the beginning of the year 1950. To add up over 40,000 Bahawalpuri refugees also came to the Union. By the year 1952, the refugee population in Pepsu was about 5 lakhs.<sup>4</sup> Refugees were provided for at fourteen different places in Patiala and at a number of places in other convenanting states.<sup>5</sup> At one time the population of refugee camps had risen above 4 lakhs in Pepsu.<sup>6</sup> When the work of administration of relief became somewhat stablized in about the summer of 1948, effort was mobilized towards effecting dispersal of those displaced persons from the numerous camps in whose case it was considered that their dispersal would stimulate and expedite their rehabilitation. It was sought to wean them away from the free dole, which it was noticed, was bringing about demoralisation, in that it was encouraging them to remain solely dependent on the government for their sustenance.<sup>7</sup>

For the attainment of this aim, gradual restrictions were put on the issue of free ration to those families of the displaced persons who had adult male employable members and who could, therefore, fend for themselves.<sup>8</sup> The employable, comprising of male adults between the ages of 16 to 60 years who did not suffer from any physical disability, who were either gainfully occupied or were offered employment through the government agencies and failed or refused to accept it, were de-rationed along with their dependents; though they were allowed to continue living in the camps. At the same time, an intensive drive was launched to effect dispersal of the landholders who at that stage, were given temporary allotment of the evacuee land and who were placed under obligation to leave the camps on securing the allotment of land.

After this dispersal the government was left with that hard core of the camp dwelling population which had not the wherewithal or the capacity to earn, their own livelihood and who had essentially to be dependent on the government for their sustenance. This period moreover, coincided with the ascending spiral of high prices of the increased cost of living. In this process of gradual tightening of the restrictions

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Facts at Glance—Relief and Rehabilitation in East Punjab*, p. 4.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

on issue of free rations in the camps during the days when the prices were soaring high and making it increasingly difficult for the camp-dwellers to eke out even a precarious existence it was felt that these restrictions might tend to over-reach themselves and bring about privation. The cumulative effect of inadequate restrictions during the period in camps also started being noticed in the form of appearance of nutritional deficiency diseases among the camp-dwellers. The restrictions on the issue of free-rations were thereupon relaxed to some extent and the scales of rations were made comparatively much more liberal than they had ever been since the beginning of the administration of relief. This brought about a complete stop to the dispersal from the camps and in fact it caused considerable gravitations back to the camp—from the rural areas where the displaced persons had been previously dispersed. This tendency was most marked in the case of Rajpura camp. The liberalisation of the scale of ration however, brought about the disappearance of nutritional deficiency diseases.

The number of Muslims who left the urban areas was about 2,00,000, most of whom belonged to the skilled, semi-skilled and un-skilled labour classes, whereas the new arrivals belonged to the trading and commercial classes and could not substitute the Muslims in the economic structure of the Union.<sup>9</sup> The Pepsu Government helped the urban refugees by allotting Muslim houses, shops and loans. Licenses for dealing in cloth, grain, transport permits and various other facilities were given, but the number that could so be rehabilitated was small indeed.

The Muslims left in the urban areas some 38027 houses and 2906 evacuee shops. Out of these 21801 houses and 1717 shops were allotted to the displaced persons. More than 3000 houses were actually got vacated from the local persons and government officials. The balance of 1447 houses were in a badly damaged condition.<sup>10</sup>

The Government of India transferred some 40,000 Bahawalpuri refugees from Kurukshetra Camp and a new township of Rajpura came into being. The Government of India contemplated that a Railway Workshop and a shoe factory would be located at Rajpura. But neither of the projects materialised. Consequently some of the 23000 of displaced persons were dispersed to Bhatinda, Samana, Patiala and other

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9. Pepsu Government, *Pepsu since Inauguration*, Patiala, 1953, pp. 37-39.

10. *Ibid.*

places in the Union.<sup>11</sup> In Patiala 1100 houses and 72 shops were constructed for them in Tripari township.

To help refugees to settle in small scale business and trading, 126 shops were constructed in Patiala at a cost of Rs. 1,12,000. A sum of Rs. 78,223 was spent out of the Rehabilitation Fund for construction of 35 stalls at Phagwara, 11 at Pinjore and 31 at Faridkot.<sup>12</sup>

Right from the year 1948, Pepsu and East Punjab were treated as one Unit for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons in the rural areas. The total area of land which was available for allotment to the refugees was 431466 standard acres.<sup>13</sup> Under the programme of semi-permanent allotment scheme land was allotted to 1,10,451 displaced persons. Due to the unparalleled magnitude of the task some mistakes crept in and while allotment were made, easy opportunities could not be made available to the individuals to put in representations as the whole scheme had to be pulled through within a specified period.

The Government of India advanced Rs. 83,30,000 for loans to the displaced persons. Rs. 22,80,000 was advanced to the urban refugees and Rs. 16,50,000 was given to Bahawalpuri refugees. In addition the Pepsu Government also provided Rs. 50,00,000 as rural and urban loans. The Pepsu Government advanced a sum of Rs. 8,00,000 for distribution as industrial loans. A sum of Rs. 3860 was advanced as loans to seven displaced students for studies and a sum of Rs. 51,285 was granted as freships to 1000 displaced students.

Rural loans to the extent of Rs. 3,98,577 was advanced during the year 1949-50.<sup>14</sup> A sum of Rs. 14,23,49,173 were advanced as *taqavi*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. Standard Acre : Considering the diversity in soil, irrigation and rainfall in various districts of west Pakistan and of districts in Pepsu, a common measure known as "Standard Acre" was evolved as unit of value based on the productivity of land. An acre of land which could yield 10 to 11 *maunds* of wheat was given the value of "16 *annas*" and was termed as standard *acre*. The physical area of standard acre thus varied and all classes of land in all assessment circles were given a valuation in *annas* so that they could be measured easily in terms of standard *acres*. In the *barani* areas where the valuation of one *acre* was "4 *annas*" 4 ordinary acres went to make a standard acre.

See, M.S. Randhawa, *Out of Ashes*, pp. 80-81.

14. *Pepsu since Inauguration*, p. 39.

loans, Rs. 1,77,770 as loans for rural repair of houses particularly in flood affected areas in the year 1950-51.<sup>15</sup> In the next year the Government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 20,00,000 out of which Rs. 15,00,000 was allocated as *taqavi* loans to the displaced farmers.<sup>16</sup>

The Ministry of Rehabilitation started three training cum work centres at Bhatinda, Patiala and Samana respectively. During the training, the trainees were given stipends and after the training they were helped in setting up their own business. Training was given in various crafts for which these were demanded. Carpentry, black-smithy, metal work, tailoring, hosiery and textile work of all kinds were the most common. In Patiala, training in manufacture of electric goods and electroplating was a special feature. Similarly, Samana specialised in training in manufacture of agricultural implements and locks.<sup>17</sup>

A Home for the destitute women and children was run at Sangrur with 303 persons as its inmates. They were trained in various crafts which was considered useful in setting them in life.

133 Kashmiri displaced families from Yol Camp were settled on Government lands and 76 Kashmiri families on other evacuee lands. *Taqavi* loans of Rs. 9,00,000 were distributed to them for rehabilitation.<sup>18</sup> A large number of landless refugee tenants and labourers had no means of earning their livelihood. An area of nearly 7000 standard acres was given to them on long leases and easy terms.<sup>19</sup>

186 Bahawalpuri Harijan families (out of 455 settled in Samana) were given loans at the rate of Rs. 300 per family.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Conclusion.*

Pepsu being the nearest to the border, attracted large number of refugees. They brought with them a legacy of pain, agitation and nervous tension. They were accommodated in concentration known as refugee camps. They were in an intense state of suggestibility which made them inclined to adopt new attitudes towards different institutions and people around them. The predominance of food anxiety engendered a feeling of hostility among them towards those who either were

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15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

18. *President Rule in Pepsu March 1953 to March 1954*, Patiala, 1954, pp. 29-30.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

looking after them or were already inhabitants of Pepsu. This developed a feeling of 'we-group' and 'they-group.' This gave rise to the refugee and non-refugee prejudice. Sometimes the covert prejudice assumed the shape of open feud, but gradually things settled down and the refugees came to be assimilated into new socio-economic pattern which did not forsake the established values and norms but added to them.

After the initial trauma the refugees positioned themselves into a state of complete self-support. They hated charity, but were anxious to stand on their own legs. Soon they began calling themselves "Pursharṭhi"<sup>21</sup> and hated to be called "Sharnarṭhi."<sup>22</sup>

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21. One who believed in self-help.

22. Refugee.

## Origin of the Dynasty of Patiala State

DR JAGJIWAN MOHAN WALIA\*

The Patiala City, which now forms a part of the Punjab State, was formerly the capital of Patiala State and later Patiala and East Punjab States Union, usually called as Pepsu. This union came into existence after independence in 1948 when Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala was the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. He was a great nationalist and he paved the way for the integration of the Indian States in the Indian Union. "The Maharaja," writes V. P. Menon, "had rendered great service to the nation by standing solidly against the manouvres of the group of rulers who were anxious to evolve a "Third Force" out of the states."<sup>1</sup> He baffled the plan of the Nawab of Bhopal and other rulers not to accede to the Indian Union. The services of this great rulers were commended by Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of India, while inaugurating the Patiala and East Punjab States Union on the 15th July 1948, "I must mention the notable contribution which His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala," the Sardar said, "made to the unity and integrity of India. He took up the cause of the country at a time when there were few friends amongst the Princely Order and when serious attempts were being made to balkanise India by means of one or more Rajasthans. It was his patriotic lead that contributed to in large measure to a change in the attitude of the princes to the problem of accession to the Indian Dominion. I acknowledge the ready and willing help which the rulers have given me in implementing the policy of integration and democratization..."<sup>2</sup> This entailed great sacrifice and self-denial on the Maharaja's part. Pepsu was merged with Punjab in 1956.

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\*Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

1. Menon, V. P., *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* (Orient Longmans Ltd., Bombay, 1956), p. 243.
2. Cited by Ganda Singh, *Patiala and East Punjab States Union, Historical Background* (Archives Department, Govt. of the Patiala and E. P. S. Union, Patiala, 1951), p. 100.

#### ORIGIN OF THE DYNASTY OF PATIALA STATE

The rulers of this illustrious dynasty whose ancestors were blessed by the seventh Sikh Guru Har Rai<sup>3</sup> and fought in the ranks of Guru Gobind Singh and blessed by him that their house was as his own (*Tera ghar mera asai*),<sup>4</sup> trace their descent from the Bhatti rulers of Jaisalmer who were the descendants of Lord Krishna. The rulers of Jaisalmer were the descendants of Salbahan, the eldest son of Rawal Jaisal. The chiefs of Patiala trace their descent from Rao Hemhel, the third son of Jaisal. In 1185, he moved to Bhatinda which was once the principality of his ancestor, Bhatti Rao. With his headquarters in the vicinity of Bhatner and Sirsa, he commenced the plunder of the adjoining territory. Gradually, he occupied the forts of Bhatner and Bhatinda. In 1200, he built a fort at Hissar. He died in 1219.

After the Rao's death, his son Rao Jundhar assumed the reins of government of Hissar. His power excited the jealousy of the Punwar Rajputs. At the instance of the latter Sultan Iltutmish demanded the tribute from the Rao. On the latter's refusal, he dispatched troops under the command of Punjab Beg. Feigning submission, the Rao attached the troops of Beg at a time when the hostilities were least anticipated and defeated them with severe loss on the 4th November, 1220. As the Sultan was engrossed in the affairs of the state, he did not attempt to regain his lost prestige. Wily as they were, the Punwars reconciled with Rao Jundhar and joined his service. At the instigation of the Punwars, the Rao visited Delhi. Being informed well in time about a plot to poison him, the Rao escaped and reached his capital where he assumed the control of the principality with the help of his minister.

The Rao's third son Bhatti Rao succeeded his father. He was the ablest of his successors. Khalifa Muhammad Hasan writes that according to the *Bansawali*, he became the ancestor of all the scions of Sidhu and Brar Jats, who due to numerosity of children came to be known under diverse names, called in the language of the country *got*. The Phool dynasty is a branch of Mehraj dynasty which originated from Brar dynasty and the Brar dynasty sprang from Sidhu, the great grandson of Bhatti Rao.<sup>5</sup>

3. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV (Oxford, 1909), p. 29.

4. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname* (Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967), p. 147; Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

5. Muhammad Hasan Khan, Khalifa Sayyad, *Tarikh-i-Patiala* (Safir-i-Hind Press, Amritsar, 1878), p. 30.



The purity of the Rajput blood was maintained till the time of Anand Rao, the son of Bhatti Rao. Anand Rao's son, married a Jat woman and thus caused the breach in the ancestral relations with the Rajput family.

Sir Lepel Griffin writes, "Khiwa was ever afterwards known as 'kot' which signifies in the Punjabi dialect, an alloy of metals of an inferior and degrading admixture."<sup>6</sup> Khalifa Muhammad Hasan writes that according to the custom of the country, all the scions of children born from this union were transferred from Rajputs to Jats and the relations with the Rajputs by marriage terminated. Unluckily, the state and power were lost which they held earlier. This fact might have been one of the causes of the decline of the state in that such causes some times tend to loosen the bonds of union, which under certain circumstances are indispensable for the existence of state and power.<sup>7</sup> Sidhu, the son of Khot, had many children and many sub-castes of Jats claim descent from him. Brar, a descendant of his eldest son Bhura had also many children. His descendant, Sangrama [Sanghar] joined the troops of Babur and fought in the battle of Panipat. "Whatever be the nature of authority on which Sangrama's alliance with Babur is based," writes S.N. Banerjee, "The fact is of undoubted importance as it weaves the family into the warp and woof of modern Indian history."<sup>8</sup>

Sangrama was at least sixty years old when Babur led an expedition to India in 1524 and returned after staying for a short time. Giani Gian Singh writes that Sangrama met Babur in 1578 B.K. corresponding to 1521 A.D.<sup>9</sup> This date is not probable. Sangrama is not mentioned in the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*. Lepel Griffin writes that he waited on Babur at Lahore in 1524. In the interview, Sangrama promised to assist the invader. He was able to collect a large number of men in a year and a half between this date and the battle of Panipat. Sangrama joined Babur with 5,000 men, fought in the battle of Panipat but was killed on the 21st April 1526.

From the above, it is clear that Sangrama was an adventurous landlord who had in his service a large number of retainers. Wise and

6. Griffin, Lepel, *The Rajas of the Punjab* (Trubner Co. London, 1878), p. 2.

7. Muhammad Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

8. Banerjee, S. N., *A History of the Patiala* (PEPSU Archives, Patiala), p. 139.

9. Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, Part III* (Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, n. d.), p. 543.

astute as he was, he assessed the situation correctly and allied with Babur. In commendation of his meritorious services, Babur granted his son Bahram the *chowdhauryat* of districts in Malwa. The chowdhury collected the revenue from the peasants within his jurisdiction and deposited the money in the imperial treasury after deducting his remuneration. He maintained a small number of troops to force the recalcitrant peasants to pay. This was a responsible post and the incumbent was in direct touch with the people and wielded considerable influence in the locality.

Babur died in 1530. Bahram remained chowdhury for the twenty five years during the turbulent period of Humayun and the political changes that followed his expulsion.

As the Bhattis were the staunch enemies of Sidhu, the imperial favour to Bahram excited their jealousy. They attacked Bahram at Bedowali. In the encounter, Bahram and his grandson Satto (Satyaraj) were killed in 1560.

Sir Attar Singh writes in the *Tarikh-i-Sidhu* that Bahram went in 1541 to settle at a village called Basera-ki-Theh which was owned by the maternal relations of Sidhuraj.<sup>10</sup> He stayed there for few years and moved to Bedowali to make his headquarters. As it was a deserted village, he commenced its reconstruction but did not live long to fulfil his intention.

Lepel Griffin writes that real name of Bahram was different from that by which he is known in history.<sup>11</sup> The Mughal Emperor bestowed the title of Bahram for his bravery and it is equivalent to the present day honour of Bahadur. His real name was Barhime from which Bahram was an easy change. "The former term," writes Prof. S.N. Banerjee, "is a Sanskrit and as such it should not be pronounced or understood by the Padshah, whereas the title Bahram akin in sound, was not duly intelligible to the bestower but was flattering on whom it was bestowed. This furnishes the plausible reason for the transmutation of the name."<sup>12</sup>

Kapura, the owner of village Kapura, Dalla of Talwandi and Jodha of Kot Samir were the powerful members of the family at the time of the downfall of the Mughal empire. It seems that the tribes

10. Attar Singh, *Tarikh-i-Sidhu* (MS), p. 18.

11. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

12. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

of Sidhu and Brar gained some importance at the time of the birth of Mehraj on account of their superior numbers. They lived in the neighbourhood of Bhatinda, Ferozepore and Faridkot. Due to desolation and scarcity of water, this area was safe refuge after the rapine and plunder, on which they sustained. Their life was nomadic and they did not cultivate. Their depredations continued till the time of Mehraj who settled at Bedowali a village near Bhatinda. According to Giani Gian Singh, he was killed in a skirmish in 1560.

The activities of Mehraj's grandson Paksharaj Pakku, his son Mohan Chand and his grandson coincide with the pontificate of Guru Hargobind. They were blessed by the Guru. In 1631, the Guru came to Malwa and began to live near Bhai Rupa. They fought in the battle of Gursar on the side of the Guru against the Mughal forces which had been dispatched to pursue the Sikhs for recovering the two horses which had been taken away from Bidhi Chand from the royal stables. The Guru blessed Paksharaj, with future prosperity.<sup>13</sup> He did not live long and died in 1632.

Mohan Chand son of Paksharaj, had to struggle against not only the Bhattis but also the Kaura and Bhullar jats who were determined to expel the family from Bedowali. "Encompassed by enemies on all sides," writes S.N. Banerjee, "Mohan Chand had to keep himself well prepared against any contingency that might arise. Besides the immensity of the task of defence, the state of constant warfare involved a strain which was beyond the slender resources of the family to bear."<sup>14</sup> Being unable to pay the revenues to the Imperial Government and finding the formidable strength of the enemy, he left his ancestral home and took refuge in the Hissar territory. After sometime, encouraged by his kinsmen and enlisting a large and strong army, he engaged the troops of the Bhattis and defeated them, but this triumph was for a short time. The Bhattis rallied under their leader Hayat Khan of Bhatner and attached him. In the hard contested battle at Bedowali, Mohan and his son Rup chand were killed.

There is a second version of the story in the *Ferozepore District Gazetteer*.<sup>15</sup> According to this, Thakur Mohan moved to Jaisalmer

13. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 543.

14. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

15. *Gezeiteer of the Ferozepore District*, 1915 (Govt. Printing Press, Punjab, Lahore, 1916), p. 74.

where he revolted and murdered Rana Chander Sen. Afterwards he and his son went with their flocks and herds to Bhatinda where in an encounter with the Bhattis they were killed. The main facts of his retreat from Bedowali, his return and his death in a battle are corroborated by all accounts. This happened in 1642.

Mohan Chand founded village Mehraj, which is in the Moga Tehsil of Faridkot district. He came to this place in course of his wandering but was not allowed to remain there. According to the *Ferozepore District Gazetteer*, Mehraj was founded in 1650 A.D.<sup>16</sup> Sir Lepel Griffin writes that on the advice of Guru Hargobind, Mohan laid the foundation of village Mehraj.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Bhai Santokh Singh is of the view that Mehraj was certainly founded by the Mohan-ki-branch of the Brar and not by Mohan.<sup>18</sup> There is no doubt that Mohan lost his chowdhuryat. He became a homeless wanderer and finally sought help from various quarters against his enemies. He led a hard life which ended tragically. The condition of his descendants worsened. Living on the produce of the jungle and on the milk of their cattle, his sons and grandsons wandered over the vast Malwa tract from 1641 to 1650. They were in search of refuge from molestation. Bhai Santokh Singh writes that these were persuaded from place to place, their women were insulted from which they would not be protected.<sup>18</sup> Guru Har Rai saved them from this miserable condition.

Guru Har Rai toured Malwa twice in order to preach the doctrines of Sikhism, first in 1650 and second in 1654. During his first tour when the Guru stayed at Guruser, Kala also named Duni Chand, one of the sons of Mohan, waited on him and complained to him against the Kaura Jats that they did not allow him to live among them. The Guru, laying emphasis on the virtues of good neighbour lines, advised Jait Purana to give five ploughs of land to the complainants for sustenance. But the latter did not care for his advice having failed in his efforts to effect reconciliation the Guru asked Kala to move with his men following morning and to settle down at the place where they would arrive at sunset. He acted in accordance with and the place was named Mehraj after their ancestor. The enemies of Kala followed him there also and in the encounter, due to the blessings of the Guru, they were defeated

16. *Ibid* ; Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

17. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

18. Santokh Singh, *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, Chap. VIII, Ras X (Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1926-30).

and the Kaura leader, Jait Purana, was killed. Thus village Mehraj was founded and its safety ensured. It became the dwelling place of the Chowdhury family in 1650.<sup>19</sup>

The Bhullars under their leader Lala were against the settlement of Kala and his followers. The latter took possession of lands adjacent to Mehraj and thus encroached upon the territory of the Bhullars. This occurred in 1654. The Guru advised the Bhullars to remain on cordial terms with Kala, but in vain.

Mehraj and its adjoining territory, particularly to the south of it, was seized by the descendants of Mohan, who despite their continual struggles with the Brars of Faridkot, retained possession of it. After sometime twenty two villages were populated in the tract (called Bahiya, which means twenty-two). The descendants of Kala and his five brothers remained in possession of it.

Out of the five surviving sons of Mohan, Kala played a prominent role in all the affairs. He was the head of the family, and looked after his brothers, his sons and his nephews particularly orphans Phul and Sandali, who were sons of Rup Chand. Bhai Santokh Singh, Macauliffe and Ratan Singh Bhangu write that Kala took his two nephews, Sandali and Phul to Guru Har Rai in 1654. In the presence of the Guru, Phul as instructed, started lapping his belly. This action attracted the Guru who asked from Kala the reason of it. On being informed that the boy was hungry, the Guru said, "That to speak of satisfying his own hunger he will satisfy the hunger of hundred of people, his descendants will have horses and army and their steeds will go as far as the Jamuna to drink water."<sup>20</sup> They returned home. When Kala's wife became aware of it, she growing jealous asked her husband to take his own sons. Kala acted in accordance with. The Guru predicted that children and their descendants "would have their own cultivations, eat the fruit of their own toil, pay no tribute and dependent on no one." In this case the reference was made to the proprietors of the twenty-two (Bahiya) villages in the Moga Tehsil.

Phul, who was blessed by the Guru, was born either at Bedowali or

19. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 292-95; Santokh Singh, *op. cit.*, Chap. VII, VIII, Ras X; Ratan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash* (Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, Rep. 1962), pp. 575-79.

Mehraj in 1619. He was only twenty years old at the time of his father's death. Kala and Phul fought against the Bhatīs at Bakharsar near Bhatinda. A large number of the Bhattīs including the relatives of their leader Sardar Hayat Khan were killed in the battle. The Sardar was pursued up to Bhatner.<sup>21</sup>

Phul laid the foundation of village Phul on the ruins of Chuman Harwala in Patta Kangar in possession of Rai Bakhtiar. Phul had friendship with Bhell Gill in Majha, who frequently waited on Rai Bakhtiar at Lahore. Phul urged on Bhel Gill to request Rai Bakhtiar to grant that place to him. After the receipt of the grant of 'Patta' from the Rai, Phul populated the place and named it after him. According to the agreement, Phul paid the land revenue to the officers of Bhatinda. As long as Phul remained alive Jhandu, Cheenu and Takht Mal, his sons by his wife Mai Rajji, were the real owners. The sons by his second wife Mai Bali Chowdhury Tiloka, Ram Singh and Raghu were not the favourites and always lived on the verge of starvation.

Mai Bali was the daughter of Kahna Dhillon. Kahna founded village Chak Dhillon near Maur. Being ill-treated, the Mai requested her father to take her to his village. Kahna came to village Phul and took her and her three sons, Rama, Tiloka and Raghu to his village. She lived in comfort at her father's house.<sup>22</sup>

Taking advantage of his position as brother-in-law of Nawab Hussain Khan of Kasur and the weakness of the empire, Ise Khan founded a small principality with his headquarters at Kot Ise Khan near Ferozepore. Being conscious that he could not fight against him, Phul retired to Bedowali. Ise Khan plundered the village and after appointing Moola Singh as the Zamindar of the village, went back. After preparations, Phul expelled Moola Singh and took possession of village Phul. He also attacked Ise Khan's territory. Daulat Khan, father of Isa Khan was defeated and much booty fell into his hands.

Hayat Khan, the chief of Bhatner, wanted to attack Dalla Brar of Talwandi as he was fed up with his marauding incursions. Dalla being a relative of Phul, sought assistance from him. Bhatner was attacked. In the battle, Mohabat Khan and Mahboob Khan, the nephews of the chief of Bhatner, were killed. The troops of Bhatner were completely routed.<sup>23</sup>

21. Ratan Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 575-79; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 547.

22. A Loh, *Fahrist Tafsil Aulad Sardar Phul wa Kaifiat Abadi Mauza Phul*, p. 14 (Patiala State Records, Punjab State Archives, Patiala):

23. Muhammad Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 2; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 547.

The *faujdar* of Jagraon pressed Phul to pay the tribute. Finding that his orders were not obeyed, he attacked village Phul and imprisoned several persons and seized some cattle and returned. Phul was not present in the village. On his return, Phul pursued him. The *faujdar* was defeated and made prisoner. He was brought to village Phul and treated honourably. In 1703, Phul was summoned by the Governor of Sirhind in order to pay the land revenue. The Governor harassed him. Phul learnt the art of keeping in the breath. His wife Mai Rajji only know about it. He instructed Guria Mirasi to take his body to Mai Rajji. He kept in the breath. Thinking him dead, the officers at Sirhind sent the Mirasi and his followers with the body to Phul. The news were conveyed to Mai Rajji, Rama and Tiloka at Phul. Rama and Tiloka set out immediately. They met the followers who were bringing the body of Phul at village Duk near Sirhind. They did not wait for Mai Rajji. It was said that Tiloka being jealous of the favouritism of Phul towards Cheema, Takhtmal and Jhandu, the body of Phul was cremated contrary to the advice of Rama. Being afraid of Rama and Tiloka, Mai Rajji moved from Duk and reached Phul. She took away her three sons to her parents at village Sadhana. Rama and Tiloka marched from Duk to Phul. They sent for Mai Bali, Raghbir and Mai Fatto from Dhilwan to Phul. They assumed control over village Phul. Phul died in 1689.<sup>24</sup>

The prophecy of Guru Har Rai was fulfilled and many chiefs were the descendants of Phul's seven children. By his first wife, he had three sons, Tiloka, Rama and Raghu, and one daughter Rani Ram Kaur of Bibi Fatto, who was married to a Sardar of village Ramdas. Village Dusur was given to her in dowry. Her descendants remained the jagirdars of that place. Tiloka is the ancestor of the chiefs of Nabha, Jind and Badrukhan. From Rama the royal families of Patiala, Bhadaur and Malod descended. Raghu was the ancestor of the chiefs of village Jeondi. By his second wife, he had also three sons Cheenu, Jhandu and Takhtmal. Jhandu died childless and the descendants of Cheenu and Takhtmal known as the "Laudhgharian" are the jagirdars of village Gumte.<sup>25</sup>

Rama, who was born in 1638 A.D., was the ancestor of the chiefs

24. *Fahrist Tafsil Aulad Sardar Phul wa Kaiyat Mauza Phul*, p. 16.

25. Muhammad Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 36; *Tazkitra-i-Khandan Raja-i-Phulkian* (MS. Ganda Singh Collection), p. 4.

of Patiala. He was not as prosperous as his brother Tiloka and was subservient to him. Once he attacked a gang of robbers who were passing by village Phul and snatched every thing from them. "This adventure," writes Khalifa Muhammad Hasan, "in a way had the effect to putting spurt to his boldness and he began to ravage the hunting ground of his ancestors, i.e., the territories of the Bhattis."<sup>26</sup> He defeated Hasan Khan the chiefs of Bhatner who was forced to flee leaving his horses and goods. He inflicted a crushing defeat on Ise Khan and a large booty fell into his hands.<sup>27</sup>

Tiloka and Rama served Guru Gobind Singh and helped him with men and money. The Guru sent them the following *hukamnama* on 2nd August, 1696. "One God and the Great Guru, Sri Guruji commands that Bhai Rama and the entire congregation is under the protection of the Guru. You should come to our presence along with a force. I am much pleased with you. Your House is Mine. Immediately on seeing this order you should proceed to our presence. Your House is My Own. You should come at once on seeing this order. You should proceed to our presence. Your House is My Own. You should come at once on seeing this order. You should come along with horsemen. You must come. On you is our kindness. You ought to come. I am sending a suit of clothes. Receive it. Bhaddon Sammat 53 (August 2, 1696 A. D.)."<sup>28</sup>

Tiloka and Rama also responded to the call of Banda Bahadur and sent a contingent of troops to fight on the occasion of battle of Sirhind.<sup>29</sup>

As the Mughal empire was on the decline, with the help of his cousin Chain Singh, who had influence with the Governor of Sirhind, Rama was able to obtain permission to collect and pay the revenues of the adjacent territories. Chain Singh was not content with the share which Rama used to give to him. He intrigued with the Governor to get the order about Rama reversed and obtained the whole district for himself. Acting on the advice of his brother Tiloka, Rama put Chain Singh to death. In 1714, the sons of Chain Singh murdered Rama when he was seventy five years old and thus revenged the death, of their father.

26. *Farhrist Tafsil Aulad Sardar Phul wa Kaifiat Mauza Phul*, p 14.

27. Muhammad Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

28. Ganda Singh, *Historical Background of PEPSU*, p. 45 ; Ganda Singh, *Hukamname*, p. 147.

29. *Travels of Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh* (Ms., Punjabi, Khalsa College, Amritsar), p. 61 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 550.



Ala Singh son of Rama, who was born at Phul in 1691, was twenty three years old at the time of the murder of his father. With a view to evenge the murder of his father, he attacked three sons of Chain Singh, i. e., Aggarsain, Kamala and Biru when they were at village Gumti with a small number of followers. In the encounter Biru and Kamla were killed and Aggarsain fled with some of his companions. Ala Singh plundered and laid waste their village Seme. At the request of the villagers of Sangirah, who suffered from the tyranny of the chiefs of Kot and Jagraon, Ala Singh established a *thana* at Sangirah. In 1718 Ala Singh left Bhadaur to his elder brother, Duna, and rebuilt Barnala which was in ruins. After the death of Sohnde Khan in 1731, Sardul Singh son of Ala Singh, occupied village Nima.<sup>30</sup>

The Rai of Kot allied with Jamal Khan, chief of Malerkotla and Nawab Asad Ali Khan, the imperial general of the Jullundur Doab, engaged the troops of Ala Singh outside the walls of Barnala. Asad Ali Khan was killed. The troops were disheartened and resorted to flight. This battle is momentous in the career of Ala Singh. "This brilliant success," writes Sir Lepel Griffin, "atonce made a great improvement in the position of Ala Singh. He was looked upon as one of the most rising chiefs, under whom both glory and plunder might be won, and many a Zamindars from across the Satluj came to Barnala to take service, sometimes alone, sometimes with two or three horsemen behind him."<sup>31</sup> After the battle of Barnala, Ala Singh took *Pahul* from Nawab Kapur Singh, the most prominent leader of the Sikhs, at village Thikriwala where a Gurdwara was erected to commemorate this event. This greatly enhanced the power of Ala Singh and helped him in conquering the neighbouring territories.

After defeating the Afghans at Barnala in 1731, Ala Singh attacked the Bhatti Chief Mohammed Amir Khan son of Hasan Khan of Bhatner. Despite desultory warfare of ten years, Ala Singh could not achieve success against his enemy.<sup>32</sup>

Ala Singh allied with Ali Mohammed Khan, who was in charge of Sirhind in 1746. The former accompanied the latter in many expeditions, one of them against Rai Kala of Kot who was defeated and fled to Pakpattan and his brother Mohkam Khan was killed. Soon there was

30. Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

31. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

32. Rattan Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 220 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

breach in their relations. The Governor arrested him and threw him into prison. But Ala Singh managed to escape. The departure of Ali Mohammed Khan to Rohilkhand put an end of hostility between the two.<sup>33</sup>

In 1749, Ala Singh built a Fort at Dhodian which later came to be known as Bhawanigarh. In 1753, after the conquest of the district of Sanaur consisting of eighty-four villages from Gurbakhsh Singh Kaleka, Ala Singh built a mud fort (*Kachi Garhi*) at Patiala in 1753. According to the *Phulkian States Gazetteer*, "This *garhi* was situated a little to the east of the present *qila*, which was founded in 1763 by Maharaja Ala Singh, and built from the custom dues collected at Sirhind."<sup>34</sup>

Diwan Lachhman Narain, the financier of Abul Samad Khan, the Governor of Sirhind, took shelter with Ala Singh. Being enraged the Governor attacked Ala Singh and in the battle at Dhodian, the latter defeated the former and plundered Sirhind.

Ala Singh allied with Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh of Kaithal, defeated Jodh Singh of Bhatinda and overran and plundered his territory. He took possession of the district of Budhlada and handed over to Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh. But a stratagem he was able to occupy the district of Munak, which was in possession of the Bhatti chiefs. Mohammad Amir Khan and Muhammad Hasan Khan sought assistance from Nawab Nasir Khan, the Governor of Hissar, to whom the former married his daughter. The forces of the allies met the troops of Ala Singh, at Dharsul, but neither party dared to risk a battle. The skirmishing and desultory fighting for seven or eight days. The death of Nasir Khan, the governor turned the tables. His troops fled and the Bhattis were defeated by Ala Singh.

Ahmad Shah Abdali appointed Zain Khan as the Governor of Sirhind in 1761. He could only withstand the attacks of the Sikhs, with the help of Jamal Khan of Malerkotla and Rai Kalha of Raikot. The next year Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India and attacked the Sikhs at village Kup. The Sikhs were defeated and massacred in large numbers. The bloody carnage is variously estimated.<sup>35</sup> As no records were kept of the combatants, the exact number of the troops engaged and number of casualties cannot be determined.

33. Muhammad Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

34. *Phulkian States Gazetteer* (Punjab Govt. Press, Lahore, 1909), p. 200.

35. J. N. Sarkar, 10,000 ; Ratan Singh Bhangu, 50,000 ; Ganesh Dass Wadehra 30,000 ; Ali-ud-Din, 30,000 ; Latif, 24,000 ; Kanalya Lal, 24,000 ; Hari Ram Gupta, 12,000.

After this bloody carnage, the Sikh force moved towards Barnala in order to seek assistance. Ala Singh remained neutral on this occasion. He left Barnala for Bhawanigarh.

"Ahmad Shah Durrani, "writes Hari Ram Gupta, "who was now stationed at Barnala, naturally expected Alha Singh to come and pay him homage. But Alha Singh was hanging between to fires. Should he attend on the Durrani, who had massacred, as many as 12,000 of his co-religionists, he would surely invite the wrath of his community. Again, should he abstain from attendance on the Shah, he was sure to lose the favour of his liege lord. He, however, choose the latter course while the Abdali too took a lenient view of the matter."<sup>36</sup> Ala Singh presented five lakhs of rupees as tribute in addition to one lakh and twenty-five thousand rupees as the price of not having his hair cut. He agreed to pay the annual tribute. Abdali conferred on him the title of Raja. He wanted to create the wedge between the Malwa and the Majha Sikhs. Cunningham writes, "The conqueror may not have been insensible to the policy of widening the difference between a Malwa and a Majha Singh."<sup>37</sup> In fact both had their own axes to grind. Ala Singh wanted to enhance his power by only tendering a perfunctory submission. "Ala Singh," writes N.K. Sinha, "Should not be lightly branded as a traitor to the Sikh cause. We have no reason to think that his submission was anything more than bowing before a storm. He had certainly no intention of paying the promised tribute regularly as dutiful subject of the Durrani ruler. His submission provided him with a way out of his present difficulties and possible place him in a position of advantage over some of his rivals."<sup>38</sup>

The action of Ala Singh at this time greatly enraged the Sikhs and they were ready to fall upon him. But due to the intervention of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who took his side, the matter was hushed up. Ala Singh joined the other Sikh confederacies to attack Zain Khan, the Governor of Sirhind. In the battle, the Governor was killed and his troops were worsted. The city of Sirhind was annihilated. The town and its adjoining territory were handed over to Ala Singh mainly through the influence of Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh.

36. Gupta, Hari Ram, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1939), p. 164.

37. Cunningham, J.D., *A History of the Sikhs* (S. Chand & Co. Delhi, Rep. 1966), p. 91.

38. Sinha, N.K., *Rise of the Sikh Power in the Punjab* (A Mukherjee Co., Calcutta, 1973), p. 38.

The next year, Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India. He did not appoint a Governor at Sirhind. He entrusted the district of Sirhind on the condition that he should pay three and half lakhs of rupees to the Shah as annual tribute. Ala Singh died at Patiala in August 1765.

Ala Singh is one of the most remarkable personalities of his times. "Among the Sikhs Chiefs of his day." writes Sir Lepel Griffin, "Ala Singh was certainly one of the most distinguished. He was gallant. and at the same time prudent, and laid strongly the foundations of the most important of the Satlej States."<sup>39</sup> Anand Ram Mukhlis greatly praised his gallantry and intrepidity in attack in the foraging parties of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the battle of Manupur.<sup>40</sup> Due to his bravery and sagacity, he rose to power rapidly. Qazi Nur Mohammad, who accompanied Ahmad Shah Abdali in his sixth invasion of India in 1765, writes about Ala Singh, "In that country of Sirhind there was a chief, nay a commander of an army who was a Zamindar in that land and also a ruler Hakim, a Governor Zabit and a Commissioner Amin. Nobody else is resourceful in the countries of the Punjab, Lahore and Sirhind as he is. He has got Mohammadans also in his service. All Hindus are obedient to him."<sup>41</sup> Ala Singh was the founder of the Patiala State.

39. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

40. *Tazkira-i-Anand Ram Mukhlis*, p. 271.

41. Nur Mohammad, *Jang-Nama* (Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1939), pp. 45-46.

# The History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks

MAJOR JAMES BROWNE

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY DR GANDA SINGH

## Introduction by the Editor

The *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks* by Major James Browne is the first regular treatise on the Sikhs written by an Englishman. The whole of it is not, however, his original work. As he himself tells us in the *Introduction* and in the body of *Tract*, the greater part of it is the translation of the abridged Persian version of a Devnagri manuscript in the possession of two Hindus with whom he came into contact in 1783. When deputed to the court of Delhi, he had evidently been instructed by the Governor General of the East India Company at Calcutta, Mr. Warren Hastings, to collect every possible information about the then rising power of the Sikhs. They had then established themselves completely in the Panjab and their incursions carried them occasionally not only to the gates of Delhi but also to the territories of the Nawab Vizir of Oudh, a friend and ally of the East India Company. This not unoften caused considerable anxiety to the Governor General. As his personal agent, James Browne, therefore, 'took every opportunity to acquire a knowledge of the strength, resources, disposition, and constitution of the several states bordering on the provinces of Agra and Dehly, by seeking out and cultivating a personal intimacy with the best informed men on these several subjects. 'In the course of these researches,' he continues, 'the first and most important object which presented itself was the great irregular Aristocracy of the Sicks, a sect which, from a small beginning in the neighbourhood of Lahore, has established itself in the complete possession of all the country between the Attock and the Sutledge and levies contribution to the very frontier of the Vizir's dominions.' (*Introduction*, p. 411.)

'Having met,' he says, 'with two Hindoos of considerable knowledge, who were natives of Lahore where they had resided the greater part of their lives, and who had in their possession accounts of the rise and progress of the Sicks, written in the *Nuggary* (or common Hindoo) character, I persuaded them to let me have a translation of

them in the Persian language, abridging it as much as they could do, without injuring the substantial purpose of information....This Persian sketch of an history, I have translated into English.' (*Int.*, p. 412.)

This Persian manuscript was, no doubt, the *Risala-i-Nanak Shah* by Budh Singh Arora of Lahore, written in collaboration with Lala Ajaib Singh Suraj of Maler (Kotla). According to the colophon of the *Risala dar Ahwal-i-Nanak Shah Darwesh* in the Aligarh Muslim University, Abdus-Salam Section, *Tarikh-i-Afghanan* No. 156/22, Budh Singh Arora Lahauri was a *Mulazim*, a servant (evidently, a clerk) of James Browne. The Aligarh manuscripts dated 1197 Al-Hijri, 1783 A.D., appears to be one of the earliest copies like the one in the British Museum, London, No. Add. 26273.

The English translation was made by James Browne for the information of the Governor General, Warren Hastings. As the manuscript was found to be extremely defective and said nothing about the manners and customs of the Sikhs, Browne not only inserted in the *Introduction* all that he was able to discover on those subjects, but he also brought the narrative up to the date of translation, April 1785. To this he gave the title of *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*. The last thing referred to by him therein is the treaty entered into on March 31, 1785, between the Marathas represented by Ambaji Ingle and the *Khalsaji* by Sardar Baghel Singh and others. He obtained a copy of this treaty and submitted it on April 9, 1785, to Mr. John Macpherson, then acting as the Governor General. As he makes no mention of the Definitive Treaty between the same parties concluded on May 10, the English translation had evidently been made before that date. It may incidentally be mentioned here that these treaties between the Sikhs and the Marathas and the alliance of the Sikhs and the East India Company proposed in the month of May 1785 fell through and did not come to fruition.

James Browne was born about the year 1744 and joined the East India Company's army in 1765 as a cadet at the age of 21. He was commissioned as Ensign on November 10, 1765, became a lieutenant on May 2, 1767, and a captain on June 30, 1771. In 1772, he attracted the attention of Warren Hastings and was appointed his aide-de-camp. In that capacity his relations with Warren Hastings became cordial and he reposed full confidence in him. He was appointed collector of the Jungle Terai Districts in 1774 and served there for six years. He also saw active service from 1777 with the 14th Battalion Sepoys

(formerly 24th) in the Maratha wars in the Gohad district. On January 19, 1781, he was promoted to the rank of Major.

With the death of Najjaf Khan in April 1782, there arose a tussle for power at the Court of Emperor Shah Alam at Delhi. The Emperor was too weak a man to control the affairs of state. The struggle between the claimants for power (Mirza Shafi Khan, Afrasiab Khan, Najjaf Quli Khan and Muhammad Beg Hamadani) afforded an opportunity to the Sikhs, the Jats and the Marathas to try their hands at securing control of Delhi and the Emperor. This set Warren Hastings athinking. He wished to be kept in touch with the political developments at the Mughal capital so that he could act in time to safeguard the interests of the East India Company and to restore the authority of the Emperor from whose ostensible bounty the Company derived its constitutional status in the country. He, therefore, decided in August 1782 to send an agent of his to the Imperial capital. Major James Browne was selected for the job.

Major James Browne was instructed by the Governor General, Warren Hastings, to first proceed to Lucknow and there to express to Nawab Vizir Asaf-ud-Daula his desire, in consideration of the Nawab's letters, to assist him in the retrieval of the affairs of the king at Delhi, and to receive from the Nawab Vizir such commands as he may give and to consider and execute them as the Governor General's.

At Delhi, he was, on behalf of the Governor General, "simply to assure the King of the attachment of the Company, my Principal, to his person and Interest... and to afford him such substantial proofs of it as the state of our affairs will admit,...my sole objects are to manifest to the world at this particular time, the attachment of the Company and of the English Nation to promote his Interests and to know in what manner we may effect it." (Hastings to Browne, August 20, 1782, *Browne's Correspondence*, No. 1, pp. 1-5.)

He was also asked not to take any active part in politics or to ally himself with any particular party.

Emperor Shah Alam, referred to as King above, then needed a stable Government at the capital, and for protection of his dominions from the incursions of the Sikhs and the Marathas.

While at Lucknow, where he arrived on November 1, 1792, or a day or two earlier, Browne was persuaded by Nawab Asaf-ud-Dualah to help his relative Shafi Khan continue in power at Delhi. He had been appointed minister by the Emperor in September 1782 and had been

acquired supremacy at Delhi with the help of Muhammad Beg Hamadani. Arrived at the capital, Browne became an active supporter of Shafi Khan and recommended to Warren Hastings to come personally to the capital along with Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula at the head of their troops to form an anti-Sikh alliance. He even contemplated inviting the Marathas against the Sikhs, but Shafi Khan succeeded in dissuading him from this project, and, to gain his point, 'convinced him that the Maratha leader was perhaps an even greater danger to British dominion than the [Sikh] marauders from the north.' Browne repeatedly pressed upon the attention of Hastings the advisability of a military alliance with Shafi Khan. Hastings, however, no longer trusted the political sagacity of his agent and felt that he was not acting in accordance with, and within the limits of, the instructions issued to him.

In the month of August 1783, Browne changed sides and became a supporter of Afrasiab Khan instead of Shafi Khan as the former offered to enter into an alliance and sign treaty with the English and "to assign lands for the payment of nine or ten battalions to be stationed near Delhi." The murder of Shafi by Muhammad Beg Hamadani on September 23, 1783, cleared the way for Afrasiab Khan. Browne saw the Emperor at Delhi on February 5, 1784, and learnt of his Majesty's financial hardship. Afrasiab at this time said that if the Company failed to support him, he would be driven to the only alternative of joining the Marathas. The situation, however, became complicated with the flight of Prince Jawan Bakht to Lucknow in April 1784. Hastings was then there. He felt favourably inclined towards the Prince and was prepared to send him to Delhi with English troops, provided he was granted pardon and restored to favour. He was even prepared, in that case, to send troops to defend the Emperor's interests provided they were on no account used against Mahadji Sindhia.

Mahadji Sindhia now appeared on the scene and offered to have the prince restored to his position. Afrasiab meekly submitted to the Maratha leader and joined his camp in October 1784. But he was murdered on November 2 by Shafi's brother Zain-ul-Abidin. Mahadji Sindhia then assumed control of Delhi and acted as Regent and Commander-in-Chief, having been appointed *Vakil-i-Mutlaq* by the Emperor on December 1-3, 1784. During this period James Browne acted in a manner prejudicial to Mahadji Sindhia and not in conformity with the policy and wishes of his masters.



Warren Hastings left India in February 1785, and his successor, Sir John Macpherson, recalled Browne on March 1, 1785. He was then no longer needed there, as James Anderson was already there with the Maratha camp. Thus ended the mission of James Browne to the Imperial Court at Delhi, and he left for Calcutta on May 12, 1785.

Major James Browne turned out to be no good a diplomat. He could not take a detached view of things and was easily carried away by his emotions. As a man of strong likes and dislikes, he could be easily influenced to take sides. As a diplomat and an Agent of the Governor General, he was to represent the views of his masters and remain obedient to, and within the limits of the, instructions that had been given to him at the time of his appointment, or issued from time to time. This he did not do, with the result that, at times, he acted at variance with the policy of his principals. Evidently he was not a good judge of men and things and did not have a sufficiently keen eye for discernment. He could not rightly understand and interpret the intentions and policy of his government, and unnecessarily landed them in awkward positions. From the very beginning he entered into party politics of Delhi. His taking sides at first with Shafi Khan and then lending undue support to Afrasiab Khan were wrong steps from diplomatic point of view. And his opposition to Mahadji Sindhia in face of the declared views and policy of the Governor-General, Warren Hastings, does not appear to be very wise. His distrust of the Maratha leader was misplaced, while Warren Hastings on the other hand, was right in trusting him. All this contributed to the failure of his mission.

(The mission of James Browne has been described at some length by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in the *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, Vol. XIV. The *Browne Correspondence* published by the National Archives of India, Delhi, 1960 ; the *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, vols. V, VI and VII, and other relevant records preserved at the National Archives, read along with Saiyad Muhammad Husain's *Munashat-i-Hussaini* and Khair-ud-Din Allahabadi's *Ibrat Namah*, give practically, a complete picture of the mission. For other supplementary material, the inquisitive reader is referred to the bibliography appended to the *Browne's Correspondence*, pp. 349-52.)

Major James Browne, however, was not satisfied with his recall. He left for England early in 1786. He nursed a grievance against Sir John Macpherson, the successor of Warren Hastings, for the aspersions

that his government had cast upon him. On Macpherson's arrival in England, therefore, Browne called upon him to apologize in public. This, Sir John refused to do. Browne thereupon, challenged him to a duel which was fought at Hyde Park, London, in September 1787. Both escaped unhurt.

While Browne was in England, he submitted on September 17, 1787, to Mr. John Motteux, the Chairman of the Honourable Court of Directors for the Affairs of the Honourable United East India Company, in response to his wish, a copy of his *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, which the Chairman was pleased to order to be printed along with his Description of the Jungle Terry Districts, submitted earlier on June 20. These two *Tracts* were published in London in 1788 under the common title of *India Tracts*. According to the editor of the *Browne Correspondence*, "these *Tracts* have proved of great value to later historians and form perhaps the only beneficial consequence of his stay at Shah Alam's court." (*Introduction*, p. 415.)

Browne was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel on February 2, 1788, and he returned to India. He married at Calcutta on December 16, 1789, Miss Catherine Charlotte Raper, to whom was born their only son, James Edward Browne.

Major James Browne died at Dinapore on June 22, 1792 at the age of 48.

As we have seen above, James Browne had a literary bent of mind and was interested in Persian and Hindustani literature. He acquired proficiency in both of these languages and employed talented men of letters as his *munshis* or clerks. The names of Budh Singh Arora, Muhammad Salah-ud-Din, Saiyad Muhammad Husain and Muhammad Saleh Qudrat deserve special mention.

Budh Singh Arora of Lahore, as mentioned above, was the author of *Risala-i-Nanak Shah* which had been based on a Devnagri manuscript history of the Sikhs. Lala Ajaib Singh Suraj of Maler (Kotla) was a collaborator of Budh Singh in this work. It was this *Risala* that became the basis of Browne's *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*.

Muhammad Salah-ud-Din was the brother of Muhammad Khair-ud-Din Allahabadi, the *munshi* of Mr. Anderson, the British Resident at the Camp of Mahadji Sindhia. On the recommendation of Major William Palmer, the British Resident at the court of Nawab Vizir Asaf-ud-Daulah of Oudh in 1782, James Browne employed Salah-ud-Din as his *munshi* and *vakil*. Like his brother, the author of *Ibrat*

*Namah*, he had facile pen and was a master of the art of writing. None of his writings has so far come to light. After the recall of James Browne in 1785, Salah-ud-Din entered the service of James Anderson and was employed by him to attend on the Mughal emperor on his part. But as both the brothers, Khair-ud-Din and Salah-ud-Din, were found to be 'in intrigue with Mahadji Sindhia and the Mughal Court behind the Resident's back, they were dismissed from the Company's service in 1786.' (*Browne's Correspondence*, p. 291 ; CPC, vii, Nos. 487, 498.)

Saiyad Muhammad Husain seems to have been in the service of James Browne in 1197-98 A.H., 1783-84, and his *Munashat-i-Husaini* is a collection of letters of *Muin-ud-Daulah*, Major James Browne addressed to Emperor Shah Alam, Nobles and Grandees of the Empire, 1197-98. (*Browne's Correspondance*, p. 349.)

In the colophon of his *Tarikh-i-Ali*, Muhammad Saleh Quadrat tells us that he had written it at the express desire (*hasab-i-furmaish*) of James Browne. The manuscript preserved in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, Patna, bears the date 18th December, 1785, and is transcribed in the hand of Saiyad Muhammad Husain, *munshi*, of James Browne.

Munshi Jan-i-Alam *Shirin-ragam* translated into Persian for his master of a Hindi manuscript history of the Kachhwaha Rajas. James Browne had obtained this work from Jaipur in 1198 A.H. (1783-84 A.D.) and its translation was completed by Jan-i-Alam at Agra in Shawwal 1198 A.H. (August-September 1784) under the title of *Bansawali-i-buzurgan-i-Maharajadhiraj Sawai Partap Singh Bahadur* from their origin to 1198 A.H. (1783-84). [Br. Mus. Rieu, i, 301 a.]

The National Archives of India has, under the editorship of its Director, Shri K.D. Bhargava, published the entire correspondence of Major James Browne connected with his mission to the Court at Delhi, 1782-85. There was a considerable lacuna in the volume of correspondence available at the National Archives. This has been filled by copies obtained from the Commonwealth Relations Office, London. In its present form it will be of immense value not only to the students of general Indian history, but also to those of the Maratha and Sikh history, with particular reference to their efforts at expansion towards the Mughal capital and its neighbourhood. Incidentally, it throws a flood of light on the Maratha-Sikh relations during this period resulting in the treaties of March 31 and May 10, 1785, referred to above.

According to the editor of the *Browne Correspondence*, the *India*

*Tracts* 'besides giving accounts of the revenue and trade of the Jungle Terai Districts and of the rise of the Sikh power assembled much material from Persian manuscripts which Browne had come across while on his mission.' 'These *Tracts*,' he continues, 'have proved of great value to later historians.' The second Tract, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks* in particular, has been considerably relied upon and extensively used by historians like John Malcolm, W.L.M'Gregor and Joseph D. Cunningham. And the result has not been very happy. Many a mistake of the Persian manuscript translated by Browne have come to be treated. It is true that with the passage of time this work has practically disappeared and is now extremely rare, difficult to be found even in some of the largest libraries of India and abroad. Yet it is there, and its age lands to it a certain amount of historical glory and authenticity which unfortunately does not otherwise belong to it. And this is, in truth, my only apology of reprinting it in its present edited form.

It first attracted my notice in March 1928 through an article entitle *Sikh Itihas* by Sardar Karam Singh published in the Phagan-Chetra 1984-85 (Bk.) issue of the *Phulwari*. Therein on page 425, col. 2, the learned historian mentioned it under No. 3 of his bibliographical study of the Sikhs and said : "This is the earliest book which contains a regular account of the Sikhs." I have done my best but I have not been able to get at this book so far. It should be available in the library of the Sikhs. Luckily, I was able to secure a copy of it from a bookseller in London in February 1932. Ever since then I have been thinking of publishing an annotated edition of it, correcting the various factual mistakes and wrongful statements that had crept into it through the original Persian manuscript. The historical knowledge of the author of the *Risala-i-Nanak Shah* was very poor indeed, and Major Browne had evidently not the leisure and facilities to check it up with more reliable authorities. There are no serious mistakes in Browne's postscript and *Introduction*, which are mostly based on his own first-hand knowledge and personal observations. Here and there, of course, one comes across reflections of his own prejudices. But they are natural to the circumstances in which he lived, and are negligible.

The corrections of mistakes and clarifications of doubtful points have all been made in the footnotes. I have not followed the new system of giving the footnotes at the end, adopted only for the facility

of printers. As in this case the footnotes do not immediately attract the attention of the reader ; they are likely not to be referred to at all. Thus they lose their usefulness and defeat the purpose for which they are added. I have, therefore, adopted the old and more useful method of giving the footnotes at the bottom of the pages containing the indicating number. No changes whatever, have been made in the body of the text. The old spellings, capital letters, etc., have been allowed to stand as they were.

Those of the readers to whom the word *Sikh* spelt as *Sick* looks queer would be interested to know that it has been spelt in as many as twenty-two different ways in old books and records, e.g.,

**Seck**—Jean Law de Lauriston, *Memoire* (1913), p. 508.

**Seeck**—Griffith to Adams ; Major Palmer to G.G., 13-2-1785.

**Seek**—Polier, P. C. Gupta, *Introduction*.

**Seick**—Griffith to Adams.

**Seik**—IRD For. Deptt. Secret Index, 1783, LR 23-11-1783, Cons. 3-3-1784.

**Seikh**—*Triumphal Recep. of Seikh Guns*, Picture; Forrest, *A Picturesque Tour*. 87-89, 91, 115, etc.

**Seyque**—Jean Law de Lauriston, *Memoire*.

**Shik**—Bengal Newspapers, etc.

**Shikh**—Bengal Newspapers, etc.

**Sic**—Forrest, *Select. Hastings' Memoir*, p. 59.

**Sic'hs**—Wilkins, Chas.

**Sick**—Browne, James.

**Sicke**—Mouton, *Rapport*.

**Sicque**—Forster, George, *Travels*.

**Siek**—IRD Records.

**Siekh**—IRD Records.

**Sik**—Scot, J. Trans. *Memoirs of Eradat Kh.*, p. 58.

**Sike**—Birstow, 24-1-1783, For. Deptt. Sec. Cons., 3.3. 1783.

**Sikh**—Common.

**Sique**—Polier, *Siques*.

**Syc**—Raymond, *Seir Mutagherin*.

**Syck**—Raymond, *Seir Mutagherin*.

Patiala

GANDA SINGH

April 30, 1960.

**History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs**

To John Motteux, Esq. Chairman of the Honorable Court of Directors, for the Affairs of the Honourable United East India Company.

Sir,

Conformably to the wish which you were pleased to express, that I should furnish you with an account of the rise and present state of the tribe of people called Sicks, I now beg leave to submit to your perusal, the following translation which I have made, of a Persian manuscript, written by my desire while I resided at the court of Dehly to which I have added all the information which I have by other channels acquired, respecting that people ; and I have accompanied the whole with a map, specifying the extent of their territories, the names of their chiefs, together with the places of their respective residence, and the number of their forces. I shall be very happy if this tract is thought in any degree worthy of your attention and beg leave to subscribe myself, with great truth and respect.

Harley Street,  
September 17, 1787.

Your most obliged humble servant,  
James Browne.

**Introduction by the Author**

During the time of my residence as the English Minister at the Court of His Majesty Shah Alum, I took every opportunity to acquire a knowledge of the strength, resources, disposition, the constitution of the several States bordering on the provinces of Agra and Dehly, by seeking out, and cultivating a personal intimacy with the best informed men on those several subjects. In the course of these researches, the first and most important object which presented itself was the great irregular Aristocracy of the Sicks, a sect, which from a small beginning in the neighbourhood of Lahore, has established itself in the complete possession of all the country between the Attock and Sutledge, and levies contributions to the very frontier of the Vizier's dominions.

Having met with two Hindoos<sup>1</sup> of considerable knowledge, who were natives of Lahore, where they had resided the greater part of their lives, and who had in their possession, accounts of the rise and progress of the Sicks, written in the Nuggary<sup>2</sup> (or common Hindoo) character, I persuaded them to let me have a translation of one of them in the Persian language, abridging it as much as they could do, without injuring the essential purpose of information. After all, I found it extremely defective in regular continuation of dates, and therefore not deserving the name of a history, however, the dates of the principal events are clearly determined; future opportunities and greater leisure, than I possessed while at Dehly, may ascertain those which are at present unknown. This Persian sketch of an history I have translated into English, and now beg leave to offer it to my honourable masters, as I am persuaded that the rapid progress of this sect will hereafter render a knowledge of them, their strength, and government, very important to the administration of Bengal. But as in the Persian manuscript very little is said of the manners and customs of the Sicks, I shall insert in this introduction all that I have been able to discover on those heads.

The people known by the name of Sicks, were originally the common inhabitants of the provinces of Lahore and Multan, and mostly of the *Jaut* tribe; the doctrine on which their sect is founded was introduced by *Gooroo Nanak*, about two hundred and fifty<sup>3</sup> years ago, and appears to bear that kind of relation to the Hindoo religion, which the Protestant does to the Romish,<sup>4</sup> retaining all the essential principles, but being abridged of most of its ceremonies, as well as of the subordinate objects of veneration. At first, the sect was merely speculative, quiet, inoffensive,

1. James Browne does not mention the names of those two Hindu gentlemen. There is no doubt, however, that they were Budh Singh Arora of Lahore, the author of the *Risala-i-Nanak Shah*, and Lala Ajaib Singh of Maler (Kotla), his collaborator. According to the colophon of this treatise, it was written at the instance of Major James Browne in 1197 A.H., 1783. (British Museum, London, Pers. MS. Add. 26273; also Aligarh Muslim University Abdus-Salam Section *Tarikh-i-Afghanan* No. 156/22.)
2. Nagri, Devnagri or Sanskrit characters.
3. Should be 'about three hundred years.' Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion was born in 1469 A.D. (1526 Bikrami), and he commenced his preachings at the age of about twenty.
4. According to the Sikhs, their religion *does not* 'bear that kind of relation to the Hindu religion which the Protestant does to the Romish.' The opinion of

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and unarmed ; they were first persecuted by the barbarous bigotry of Aurungzebe;<sup>5</sup> and persecution, as will ever be the case, gave strength to that which it meant to destroy ; the Sicks from necessity confederated together, and finding that their peaceable deportment did not secure them from oppression, they took up arms to defend themselves against a tyrannical government; and as will always happen where the common rights of humanity are violated, a hero<sup>6</sup> arose, whose courage and ability directed the efforts of his injured followers, to a just, though severe revenge. As the progress of these events is related in the history, I shall only say at present that as the Mogul government declined, the Sicks in spite of repeated attempts to suppress them, continued to acquire strength. They made the distinction of their sect a political as much as religious principle, rendering the admission into it easy to all, and the immediate temporal advantages of protection and independence, as great and as evident as possible ; while they at the same time levied contributions upon all their neighbours who refused to come into their fraternity.

As to their government it is aristocratical, but very irregular and imperfect, for the body of the people is divided under a number of chiefs, who possess portions of country, either by former right as Zemindars, or by usurpation. These chiefs enjoy distinct authority in their respective districts, uncontrolled by any superior power ; and

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*Continued from page 412]*

Miss Dorothy Field in her *the Religion of the Sikhs* on this point may be quoted here for the information of the readers.

"The word Hinduism is undoubtedly capable of a wide application, but it is questionable whether it should be held to include the Sikhs in view of the fact that the pure teachings of the Gurus assumed a critical attitude towards the three cardinal pillars of Hinduism, the priesthood, the caste system and the Vedas. A reading of the *Granth* strongly suggests that Sikhism should be regarded as a new and separate religion, rather than a reformed sect of the Hindus." (p. 10.)

5. Persecution of the Sikhs began in the first year of Emperor Jehangir's reign, when Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru, was tortured to death for propagation of his faith. (See Memoirs of Jehangir : the *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri*, Nawal Kishore edition, p. 35.)
6. The 'hero' referred to here is Banda Singh Bahadur who was converted and baptized into the Sikh faith by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Guru, at Nander in the Deccan a few days before his death on 6-7th October, 1708. For a detailed account of this hero, see Ganda Singh's *Life of Banda Singh Behadur*.



only assemble together on particular occasions for the purposes of depredation, or of defence ; when in a tumultuous Diet,<sup>7</sup> they choose by majority of votes, a leader to command their joint forces during the expedition ; generally from among those chiefs whose Zemindaries are most considerable; his authority is however but ill obeyed by so many other chiefs, who though possessed of smaller territories, yet as leaders of the fraternity of Sicks, think themselves perfectly his equals, and barely allow him, during his temporary elevation, the dignity of *Primus inter Pares*.

About thirty years ago, one Jessa Singh Kelal, a chief of considerable weight and abilities, having been chosen commander of their grand army, when it expelled the Aumils of Ahmed Shah Durrany from the city, and Subah of Lahore, became so popular that he ventured to strike rupees at the mint of Lahore in his own name, with an inscription in Persian to this effect, 'Jessa Kelal' "conquered the country of Ahmed," and struck this "coin by the grace of God ;"<sup>8</sup> but after

7. A conference or a religio-political meeting.

8. The inscription on the coin is said to have been :

*Sikka zad dar jahan ba fazle Akal  
Mulke Ahmad grift Jassa Kalal.*

But in reality no such coin was issued by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (called 'Kalal' on account of the Distillers' profession of his ancestors). When the Sikhs occupied Lahore and established a short-lived *Badshahat*, with Jassa Singh as *Badshah*, the local Muslims officials and *mullahs* were very much perturbed. With a view to instigating and exciting the Afghan invader, Ahmad Shah Durrani, against the Sikhs, they struck a few bars with the above inscription and sent them to Ahmad Shah (Ganesh Das Bادهرا, *Chahar Bagh-i-Panjab*). He was already burning with rage on account of the severe blow dealt by Sikhs at his prestige in driving his son, Taimur, away from the Punjab. The insulting inscription had the desired effect and brought the infuriated invader in 1759 to wreak his vengeance and recover the province.

It may be mentioned that a Sikh feels insulted if addressed without the surname of Singh. I cannot, therefore, be believed that a man like Jassa Singh could have inscribed his half name on a coin issued by himself, and that too with the word *Kalal*, which even a poor professional distiller would not tolerate to have it added to his name. Moreover, a Sikh seldom claims any credit to himself. He does every thing in the name of the Guru, as testified by the Sikh coins issued by the Sikh *misaldars* in 1764. They bore the following inscription :

[Continued on page 415]

they had been current about fifteen years, the grand Diet of the Sick chiefs (called *Goormutta*)<sup>9</sup> determined to call in all those rupees and to strike them in the names of *Gooroo Nanack* and *Gooroo Gobind Singh*, the first and the last of their Gooroos, or religious leaders, the latter of whom directed them to take up arms against the Mussulmans, and rendered general a kind of feast to be celebrated at the grand Diet, or *Goormatta*, at which feast they use large dishes called in Persian *Daig*, which I mention to explain the Persian inscription<sup>10</sup> used on their coin from that time, which is as follows, "Gooroo Gobind Singh, received from Nanack the *Daig*, the Sword, and rapid Victory."

The city of Lahore is at present divided among the three most powerful chiefs, who share the revenue arising from all imposts and duties, etc., within the city, including the mint; the names of the present possessors are Gujer Sing, Subah Sing, and Laina Sing.

The Diets of the Sicks are held at the holy Tank (bason of water) of *Amrutsur*, about twenty coss north by east from Lahore,<sup>11</sup> which was appointed for the purpose by their Gooroo. Here, as I said before, the commander for the campaign is chosen, and their expeditions for the season planned.

The plunder collected during these expeditions is divided among the chiefs according to the number of their followers, to whom each chief makes his own distribution.

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*Continued from page 414]*

*Deg o tegh o nusrat be dirang*

*Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.*

'Kettle (the symbol of the means to feed the poor), Sword (the symbol of the power to protect the weak and helpless), Victory and unhesitating Patronage have been obtained from Gurus Nanak-Govind Singh.' Even the Great Maharaja Ranjit Singh would not issue a coin in his own name. He maintained the same old inscription of the Khalsa and called his coins *Nanakshahi* or 'belonging to Emperor Nanak,' the founder of the Sikh religion.

9. The word *Gurmata* has been erroneously interpreted as and applied to the grand meetings or councils of the Sikhs. In fact it means a resolution passed at such councils. *Mata* literally means opinion or resolution, and it is called *Gur-mata*, opinion or resolution endorsed by the Guru, because the Guru is believed to be always presiding over the deliberations of the Khalsa held in the presence of the Holy Book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

10. For the meaning of the Persian inscription, see No. 8 above.

11. The exact distance between Amritsar and Lahore is thirty two miles according to English measurement.

In the districts not reduced to their absolute subjection, but into which they make occasional incursions, they levy a tribute which they call *Raukey*, and which is about one fifth (as the Marhatta Chout is one fourth) of the annual rent ; whenever a Zemindar has agreed to pay this tribute to any Sick chief, that chief not only himself refrains from plundering him, but will protect him from all others ; and this protection is by general consent held so far sacred, that even if the grand army passes through a Zemindary where the safe guards of the lowest Sick chief are stationed, it will not violate them.

Since the Sicks became powerful and confederated for the purpose of conquest, they have called their confederacy *Khalsa Gee*,<sup>12</sup> or the State, and their grand army *Dull Khalsa Gee*, or the Army of the State.<sup>13</sup>

As the extent of their possessions is clearly expressed in the accompanying map ; as well as the names of their chiefs, and the number of their forces from the best authorities, I shall only observe that the country is said to be in a state of high cultivation which, I believe, because they carry into it all the cattle fit for tillage, which come into their possession by plunder, collect a very moderate rent, and that mostly in kind, and during any intestine disputes, their soldiery never molest the husbandman.

Trade however, is in a low state, owing to the insecurity of merchants going backwards and forwards through the territories of so many independent chiefs.

Of their manufactures, the principal are very fine cloth, which they make at Lahore, as also the best arms in Hindostan.

Their cavalry is remarkably good, the men being very hardy and well armed with sabres and excellent matchlocks, which they use with great dexterity ; the horses bred in their country are of one of the best breeds in the empire, owing to the use formerly made there of Arabian and Persian stallions, and something in the temperature of the air and water of that country. Most of these soldiers have two or three horses each, by which means their incursions are made with great rapidity, their armies marching from fifty to one hundred and twenty miles a

12. The term *Khalsa ji* has a very wide application. It is used for the entire body of the Sikh nation, for a group of Sikhs and also for an individual Sikh.

13. *Dal Khalsa ji* means the Army of the Khalsa.

day; their dress is dark blue, as ordered by *Gooroo Gobind*,<sup>14</sup> and gives them, when collected in large bodies together, a very dismal appearance.

The chiefs are only distinguishable from their followers by finer horses and arms.

I have conversed with several Sicks who were sent to me by different chiefs on complimentary messages; and I perceived a manly boldness in their manner and conversation, very unlike the other inhabitants of Hindostan, owing no doubt to the freedom of their government.

In their camps they use no tents, even the chiefs are sheltered by nothing more than small *Numgheras* (square canopies of coarse cotton cloth) supported on four slender poles—the common soldiers pitch a blanket on two sticks, and fasten the corners down to the ground with wooden pins, so that they encamp or decamp in a few minutes.

Among their customs, the following are remarkable:

They will not use tobacco, though its use is universal to all the inhabitants of Hindostan, yet they drink spirits and smoke *Bhang*<sup>15</sup> (the leaves of hemp) to the greatest excess of intoxication.

In admitting a proselyte, they make him drink *Sherbet* out of a large cup, with certain ceremonies, as will be seen hereafter, and which are designed to signify that every distinction is abolished,<sup>16</sup> except that

14. Guru Govind Singh never ordered his Sikhs to put on the dress of any particular colour. The zealous Nihangs, however, patronized the dark blue colour used by the Guru during his escape from Machhiwara. As the Nihangs exercised great influence in the community and occasionally led the expeditions of the Sikhs against their enemies, their dark blue dress acquired general popularity. Moreover, the dark blue dress appears to have been very convenient for the homeless Sikhs in those troubled days of the eighteenth century when moving columns of the Mughals scoured the land in search and pursuit of them, when they were not allowed to live in the towns, were caught and massacred in their villages and were hunted down like wild beasts in their hiding places in jungles and marshes.
15. The use of intoxicants, of whatever kind, is strictly prohibited to the Sikhs. There are clear injunctions against them in the *Rahit Namahs*, the Books of Sikh conduct. It is really unfortunate that the use of *bhang* had become prevalent among the *Nihangs*. *Bhang* is, however, not smoked but drunk. Smoking is rigorously prohibited and leads to excommunication.
16. Sikhism strikes at the very root of the caste system and aims at the total abolition of every kind of distinction, whether of caste or creed, of high or low, or of rich or poor. Interdining, and that too from the same plate and cup

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of being a Sick, even a Mussulman may become a Sick on these conditions. From the time that he is admitted into the fraternity, he wears a steel ring round one of his wrists, lets his hair and beard grow to full length,<sup>17</sup> and calls on the name of Gooroo in confirmation of all engagements.

These are all the circumstances respecting this sect, which are not specifically mentioned in the history, to which I will add, that a sect which contained in its original principles so much internal vigour, as sustained it against the bloody persecution of a great government determined, and interested to suppress it, raised it up again with fresh strength on every opportunity which occurred, and at length enabled it so far to subdue all opposition, as to acquire an entire and undisturbed dominion over some of the finest provinces of the empire, from whence it makes incursions into others, holding out protection to all who join, and destruction to all who oppose it; a sect, which makes religion and politics unite in its aggrandizement, and renders the entrance into it so easy to all who desire to become members of it, cannot fail to extend itself very far, and in the end to be exceedingly formidable to all its neighbours....

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at the time of admission into the Brotherhood of the Khalsa, is the first and the most important practical step in this direction. In the *Guru ka Langar* men and women of all castes and creeds, and of all religions and countries, are made to sit side by side in the same line and dine on a common floor.

17. From the time of his admission into the fraternity, every Khalsa is required to wear the following five symbols called the five *K's*.

1. *Kesh*—the Hair; never to shave head or beard or cut any hair whatever of the body.
2. *Kangha*—the comb.
3. *Kachh*—a pair of shorts, emblem of decency, purity and chastity.
4. *Kara*—an iron bangle, emblem of faithfulness and dutifulness.
5. *Kripan*—a sword, symbol of power to defend the faith and to protect the weak and helpless.

## History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks

A.H. 936 (A.D. 1529) : In the latter end of the reign of Sultan Baber,<sup>1</sup> *Nanuck Shah*, a *Dervish*, by tribe a *Ketteree*, lived in the village of Shoderah,<sup>2</sup> situated about seven crores (or *coss*) east of the river Chenab ; as he was a man of a most exemplary life, and eminent for his piety, charity, and abstinence, he became famous throughout Hindostan, and wherever he went teaching his doctrine, he made a great number of proselytes ; he wrote several books upon the nature and institutions of his order ; such as the *Purraun Sunkely*,<sup>3</sup> etc., which he distributed for the regulation of the worship of his followers. He took the title of Gooroo, or religious Teacher, and called his followers in general *Sicks*, which signifies followers of a Sect, but his immediate disciples, whom he instructed in the mysteries of his doctrine, he called *Murids*, or Disciples ; these terms are often confounded, but they are properly very distinct.

A.H. 936 After the death of Gooroo Nanuck, his successors were  
A.D. 1529 in the following order :

1. Gooroo Ankud.<sup>4</sup>

1. It was not in the latter end of the reign of Sultan Babar (who reigned only for five years from 1526 to 1530) that Guru Nanak lived. The Guru was born in 1469, began his preachings at the age of about twenty and lived up to an advanced age of seventy, dying in the year 1539.
2. It was not in the village of Shoderah (Shodara) that Guru Nanak lived. The Guru was born in the village, then known as Talwandi Raj Bhoi, now called Nankana Sahib, 48 miles south-west of Lahore (Pakistan) on the Lahore-Shahdara-Chichoki Mallian-Shorkot railway line. His father Kalu (Kalyan Chand) was then employed here as a Patwari to Rai Bular, the Chief of this place.
3. The writings of Guru Nanak were embodied in the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*. The book *Pran-sangali* is said to have been composed by Guru Nanak during his visit to Ceylone. Guru Arjan deputed Bhai Paura to the King of Ceylone who according to Macauliffe, 'received him with respect ; treated him hospitably, and gave him the required volume, with a letter and many presents for the Guru and allowed him to depart on his return journey to Amritsar. The *Pran-sangali* was subsequently stolen by a pretended Sadhu, or holyman.' 'A printed *Pran-sangali* on the science of *Jog* can now be purchased but the Sikhs do not accept it as genuine,' continues the same author. (*Sikh Religion*, i. 156 ; iii. 53-5 ; Santokh Singh, *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, etc.)
4. The order of the successors of Guru Nanak is as follows and not as given in the text :
  1. Guru Nanak (1469—1539)
  2. Guru Angad (1539—1552)
  3. Guru Amardas (1552-1574)

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2. Gooroo Amerdad.
3. Gooroo Ramdas.
4. Gooroo Arjun who wrote<sup>5</sup> the *Gurhunt*, now generally followed as the rule of discipline.

5. Gooroo Ramroy.<sup>6</sup>

6. Gooroo Hur Roy.

7. Gooroo Hurry Siri Kirshen, these Gooroos appear upon an average to have exercised their office about twenty-two years each.

A.H. 1073. In the year of the Hegira, 1073, Aurungzebe being on A.D. 1662. the throne, a son was born to Gooroo Hurry Siri Kirshen, to whom they gave the name of Taigh Behader,<sup>7</sup> when this son came to the age of puberty,—being remarkable for his piety and abstinence—his followers conceived a superstitious veneration for him, and used among themselves, to call him the true King;<sup>8</sup> he on his part, whatever he received in presents, or offerings from his disciples, or the Sicks in general, he laid out in provisions which he publicly distributed to all who chose to receive them; this brought great numbers to participate of his bounty.

A.H. 1073. The news writers of Lahore, soon transmitted an account of these circumstances to Aurungzebe, who was then engaged in the war of the Deckan; and his Majesty being very particular in his examination of all persons who pretended to extraordinary

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4. Guru Ramdas (1574-1581)
  5. Guru Arjan (1581-1606)
  6. Guru Hargobind (1606-1645)
  7. Guru Har Rai (1645-1661)
  8. Guru Har Kishen (1661-1664)
  9. Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675)
  10. Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708).
5. Guru Arjun did not write the whole of the *Granth* himself. He collected the writings of his predecessors from Guru Nanak to Guru Ram Das, and suitable compositions of Hindu and Muslim Saints into a volume and, with the addition of his own writings, compiled the work leaving a few pages blank later on used for the writings of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur. The scripture was, however, proclaimed as the *Guru* of the Sikhs, by the tenth Guru Govind Singh at the time of his death in 1708.
  6. The name 'Romroy' has been erroneously included in the order of the Gurus in place of Guru Hargobind.
  7. Guru Tegh Bahadur was not the son of Gooroo Hurry Siri Kirshen (Guru Har Kishan), but he was the son of Guru Hargobind and was born on Baisakh Vadi 5, 1678 Bikrami, April 1, 1621.
  8. The title *Sacha Padshah*, *The True King*, was at first used by the Sikhs for Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru (Muhsin Fani's *Dabistan Mazahib*, p. 233).

sanctity, he sent some *Yessawils* (Ushers) to bring Taigh Behader to his presence, who on their arrival at the place of his residence, immediately set out with them, and soon arrived the court.

A.H. 1096. Aurungzebe having called him into his presence, A.D. 1684. examined him very strictly respecting the revelations and miracles to which he supposed that he pretended ; to which Taigh Behader replied, "that he was a Dervish ; that he subsisted on the aims of the charitable, and passed his life in the contemplation and adoration of God ; but that he neither pretended to revelations nor miracles." The Shah again said, "they call you the *True King*, and Taigh Behader (which was a military title), what presumption is this ?"—to which Taigh Behader replied, "whatever is, is from God ; Dervishes have nothing to do with titles or honours." The Shah preceiving that he could discover nothing of the revelations or miracles attributed to this Dervish, gave orders for putting him to death immediately.

At that time, a Bramin of the name of Murdaneh,<sup>9</sup> who stood by, said to Taigh Behader, "If you will give me permission, I will imprecate curses on these persecutors, and by the justice of God, you shall see them instantly destroyed." But Taigh Behader, according to the counsel given to him at parting by his father<sup>10</sup> to preserve the secret of the sect, though it should cost him his life, replied, "The time is not yet come, God himself will punish them, and raise up a hero, who will exact ample vengeance for my blood."

He was accordingly put to death (A) and upon the spot where he

9. Guru Tegh Bahadur's companion in the jail at Delhi was Bhai Mati Das and not Murdaneh. For the conversation between Mati Das and Guru Tegh Bahadur, and the detailed account of the former's martyrdom, the reader is referred to Bhai Santokh Singh's *Suraj Prakash* (edited Bhai Vir Singh), Vol. XI, pp. 4430-34 ; Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, IV, pp. 381-82.

10. No 'counsel' had been given to Guru Tegh Bahadur 'at parting by his father' Hargovind who had died in March 1644 about thirty two years before November 1675 when the ninth Guru was executed in Delhi.

(A) Aurungzebe seems on this, as well as on many other occasions, to have made religion a veil to cover his political tyranny ; the real motive of this cruelty to Taigh Behader was, most probably, resentment for his having allowed his followers to call him *The True King* ; and his having used a military title, which was not granted by Royal Patent, agreeably to the customs of that Government, of all which he was exceeding jealous.



suffered Martyrdom, a monument<sup>11</sup> has been erected, which is still in being, and offerings are made at it.

A.H. 1116. Soon after this, the widow of Taigh Behader, having A.D. 1704. been left with child, was delivered of a son, to whom they gave the name of Gobind Sing,<sup>12</sup> who growing up, and being about twenty years of age, conceived an ardent desire to revenge<sup>13</sup> the death of his father ; but either finding his party too weak, or wanting resolution in his own mind to attempt so dangerous an enterprize, he (B), by the advice of the Bramins, performed a number of superstitious rites,<sup>14</sup> in expectation, that some manifestation of the Divine

11. The monument raised upon the spot where the Guru suffered martyrdom is called Gurdwara Sisganj, and it still stands near the Kotwali in the Chandni Chowk at Dehi between the fort and Fatehpuri Mosque.
12. Guru Gobind Singh, born on Poh Sudi 7th, 1723, the 22nd of December 1666, was about eight and a half years old at the time of the departure of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, for Delhi.
13. A cursory glance at the history of Guru Gobind Singh would suggest that he was far above personal animosities. In his struggles against the religious intolerance and political iniquities of the Mughals, he was not actuated by the spirit of revenge for the murder of his father but was moved by patriotic feelings born of disinterested love for his people groaning for centuries under the heel of the oppressor. The Guru never led any offensive expeditions against the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb or his provincial deputies or the hill chiefs. In all his wars either against the Rajhas of the Shiwaliks or against the Mughal Officers, whether at Bhangani, Nadaun, Anandpur, Chamkaur, Muktsar or any other place, we always find him on the defensive, taking to the sword, as the last resort, in self-defence and for self preservation. He did not occupy an inch of the enemies' lands as the result of his victories. A person of revengeful spirit cannot be expected to render timely help to his bitterest enemies or to the heir-apparent of his father's murderer. But Guru Govind Singh, willingly helped the Shivalik Rajahs in the battle of Nadaun and Prince Muhammad Muazzam Bahadur Shah in the battle of Jajau.
- (B) I have omitted the detail of these superstitions, which would but tire the enlightened European reader ; their object was, no doubt, to impress the common people with a belief that their cause was supported by divine favour and protection.
14. The author, here, seems to refer to the *Homa* Ceremony said to have been performed by the Guru at Naina Devi hill. But there appears to be no truth in this. The Guru looked to no gods and goddesses for the source of his strength. He looked only to one *Akal* and to all-steel. For detailed discussion on this, the discerning reader is referred to a very learned discourse, entitled the *Devi Punjan Partal*, by Bhai Vir Singh, published by the Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, and also embodied in his annotated edition of the *Guru Partap Suraj Granth*, Vol. XII, pp. 4974-5012.

pleasure would appear in his favour, at length a voice was said to have been heard from heaven, declaring the revenge he sought for should not be attained by him, but by his disciples after his death; and that his sect should at last arrive at the highest point of strength and dominion.

A.H. 1116. The mind of Gooroo Gobind Sing, seems to have been A.D. 1704. come disordered<sup>15</sup> by the influence of these superstitious reveries and to have remained for some time in that state; but at length having recovered his reason, he put on a dress dark blue,<sup>16</sup> let his hair and beard grow to their full length, and instructed his sect to follow his example in these points. He also directed them to arm themselves in expectation of the hour, when the prophecy should be fulfilled.

A.H. 1118. From this time, the Sicks animated with enthusiasm, A.D. 1706. began to collect together from all parts of the Empire, and multitudes of new proselytes were daily enrolled in the sect, which was rendered important by the martyrdom of Taigh Behader. Gooroo Gobind Singh, established a ceremony to be used on the reception of new proselytes, which ceremony is called *Poil*,<sup>17</sup> and consists in

15. The mind of Guru Govind Singh never became 'disordered by the influence of any superstitious reveries.' He had for some time taken to a life of retirement, study and meditation prior to his creation of the Khalsa and adopting a saint-warrior's career, dedicated to the service of his persecuted countrymen.
16. The dark blue dress was worn by him only on one occasion. He never enjoined upon his disciples to wear dark or any particular kind of dress.
17. The *Pahul* (*Poil* of James Browne) or the Baptismal ceremony of the Khalsa as initiated by Guru Govind Singh is performed as follow :  
The initiatees, having bathed and dressed in clean clothes, and wearing the symbols of the Khalsa brotherhood, are made to stand, with folded hands, in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, without any distinction of their previous caste or creed or of high or low. Then a group of five selected Sikhs (called *Panj Piare*), men of ideal Sikhs life, sit round a basin with clean pure water mixed with sugar balls. One by one these five read the prescribed hymns of the Gurus, stirring the sweetened water with a double-edged sword, a *Khanda*. After the reading of hymns is completed, the *Amrita*, as the sweetened water is then called, is given to them to drink from the same basin by a double round, first from right to left and then from left to right or *vice versa*. The leader or *Jathedar* of the group then enjoins upon the *Rahit*, or the rules of conduct of the Khalsa, telling them, in so many words, that from the moment of their initiation and admission into the Brotherhood of the Khalsa, they are to be considered to have become the sons of a common father, Guru Govind Singh, and a common mother, *Mata Sahib Devan*, the wife of the Guru, belonging to Anandpur, the Bethlehem of the Khalsa, and cut off entirely all previous religions or social associations. They are also told never to part with the symbols of the Khalsa.

making them drink Sherbet out of a cup, stirring it round with a dagger, and pronouncing a certain incantation (C) at the same time.

Advice being conveyed to Aurungzebe of all these particulars, he sent orders to the Navab Vizier Khan, who was the Foujdar of Sirhind, to take the requisite steps for suppressing this threatening insurrection : but before this order was received, Gooroo Gobind, having gone to collect his followers from the eastern provinces, died at the city of Patna ;<sup>18</sup> and his wife having died sometime before, two children whom he had, the one about six, the other about five years old, were left under the care of his mother (the widow of Taigh Behader), who hearing of the Shah's orders to Vizier Khan, attempted to fly with her two grand-children from *Amrutsur* to *Macowal*,<sup>19</sup> which was her native place. Many of Gooroo Gobind's followers accompanied, in order to escort them safe to the place of their destination. By the time they had got to the village of *Chumkore*, which was seven *coss* from Sirhind, the Navab Vizier Khan, according to the Shah's orders, sent a body of troops commanded by Khizzer Khan Malnere, together with the Bucksy of his own army, to take Gooroo Gobind's family prisoners, and bring them to Sirhind. Khizzer Khan having overtaken them at that place, the Sicks, who accompanied the Gooroo's family, defended them with the greatest resolution ; many of the Shah's people were

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Note C. The incantation I could never get the words of, though I took some pains to do so. It seems to be among the Arcana of the sect,

18. Patna is the Guru's birth place. He died at Naded in the Deccan in southern India where he had accompanied Emperor Bahadur Shah, after the death of Aurangzeb, in connection with the peace-negotiations for which he had been invited by the Emperor. For further particulars on this point see *Bada Singh Bahadur*, pp. 8-12.
19. It was not on account of the death of his wife that his two younger sons Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh were left under the care of his (Guru Gobind Singh's) mother. It was in the confusion that followed the evacuation of Anandpur by the Guru in December 1704, that his younger sons and old mother, *Mata Gujri*, were separated from him. They were then betrayed by a Brahmin servant, *Gangu*, into the hands of the Muhammadan officials of Morinda, who in their turn handed them over to Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind.

*Mata Jito*, the first wife of the Guru, had died in December 1700 (6-7th Poh 1757 Bikrami) and his other wives, *Sundri* and *Sahib Devi*, lived for some fifty years after his death.

killed, as well as of the Sicks ; but as the former were vastly superior in number, the two children, together with their grandmother, were taken prisoners, and all their wealth and property, which they were carrying away with them was plundered ; the few Sicks who survived, escaped by flight. Khizzer Khan brought his prisoners to the Navab Vizier Khan at Sirhind,<sup>20</sup> who put them in confinement, and advised Aurungzebe of it.

They say, that Vizier Khan, who had been forty years Foujdar of Sirhind, had never oppressed any person under his authority, but was distinguished for his justice and humanity ; and from the natural goodness of his disposition, he conceived a regard for these children of Gooroo Gobind, often sent for them, and shewed them kindness. It happened one day, that he was asking them in a jesting manner, how much they had been plundered of, to which the eldest of the children innocently replied, "that the wealth of Dervishes was too great to be counted." Suchanund, a Kettery, who was Dewan of the Vizier Khan, said to him,<sup>21</sup> "perhaps these children may give the same kind of answer if they are examined by the Shah ; if so, what will become of us all, and who shall satisfy his Majesty ? It would be safer to put the children to death, which is the only way of securing ourselves from the Shah's rapacity."

Vizier Khan being unwilling to destroy these innocent children, hesitated a long time ; but at length his dread of the Shah's (D) displeasure, should he suspect of having secreted the treasure plundered

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20. It was not Khizar Khan of Malerkotla who captured the sons of Guru Govind Singh in the battle of Chamkaur, but they were betrayed by a servant to the officials of Morinda as mentioned above. For full particulars see Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, Vol. V, pp. 193-199 ; *Banda Singh Bahadur*, pp. 56-59.

21. Sucha Nand, the *Peshkar* of Wazir Khan, is reported to have said at this time : "To kill a Cobra (referring to Guru Gobind Singh) and to spare its progeny is not the act of wise men. The offspring of a wolf is always a wolf."

*Note D*—This is a striking instance of the tyranny of Aurangzeb's Government, and indeed of the horrid effect of despotism, on the characters of those who live under its influence ; when we here behold a man naturally mild and compassionate, committing the most atrocious crime, from dread of the consequence which would have attended his acting conformably to his conscience, and the dictates of humanity.

from Gooroo Gobind's family, getting the better of every other consideration, he said to Khizzer Khan, "Many of your friends and followers were killed by the Sicks, who escorted these children, you ought to retaliate by killing the children, at the cause of the death of so many of the faithful" (E). Khizzer Khan, however, rejected the proposal with horror, and nobly replied, "both I and my followers are soldiers, and whoever oppose us in open war, we either kill them, or are killed ourselves; but what you propose, is the business of an executioner." However, the destined period of the children's lives being come, one Kurruckehy Beg,<sup>22</sup> a Moghul in the Shah's service, undertook to perpetrate this barbarous murder, and went to the prison where the innocent victims were confined; the children clung round the neck of their grandmother<sup>23</sup> to save themselves, but the villain tore them away, and cut their throats with a knife, in the presence of this miserable woman, who unable longer to bear such a load of clamity, her husband, Taigh Behader, having been murdered before (as we related), and her grandchildren now butchered before her eyes, sunk under the violence of grief and horror, excited by this last scene, and divine mercy by an immediate death, released her from further sufferings (F). A.H. 1118. One *Bundeh*, a *Biragee Fakeer*, and the native of a A.D. 1106. village Pundory,<sup>24</sup> in the Doab of Beit Jalinder, had

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*Note E*—Retaliation for blood called in the Koran *Kussaus*, is considered by the Mussulmans, as a morale and religious duty to the next in connection.

22. The names of the executioners, as mentioned in the Sikh Histories were Shashal Beg and Bashal Beg.

23. The children could not have 'clung round the neck of their grandmother to save themselves,' as at the time of their execution, they were in the court of Wazir Khan while the old lady was imprisoned in the Tower now known as the *Khuni Burj*.

*Note F*—Of all the instances of cruelty exercised on the propagators of new doctrines, this is the most barbarous and outrageous; defenceless women and children, have usually escaped even from religious fury. No wonder then, that the vengeance of the Sicks was so severe.

24. This is, in all probability, based on the *Risala-i-Nanak Shah* of Munshi Budh Singh. According to other writers—Irvine, Gian Singh, Macauliffe, Karam Singh and Veni Prasad—Banda Singh was born at Rajori in Punchh district of western Kashmir.

been for many years the intimate friend of Gooroo Gobind;<sup>25</sup> and hearing of the destruction of his defenceless family, he gave way to the deepest impressions of grief and resentment, which at length settled into a fixed determination to seek revenge; for this purpose, he went to all the most powerful and zealous of the Sicks, who had been the followers of Gooroo Gobind, and having excited in them the same spirit with which he himself was actuated, and enrolled himself in the fraternity of the Sicks, he, with surprising diligence and activity, and aided by uncommon abilities, collected the sect together in arms from all quarters, and inspired them with the most ardent spirit of revenge.

A.H. 1119. Fortunately for the execution of Bundah's design, about A.D. 1707. this time, Aurungzebe died in the Deckan,<sup>26</sup> and the succession to the throne being disputed between his sons (as it is well known to those who are conversant in the history of Hindostan), great confusion arose in all parts of the empire. Bundah taking advantage of this opportunity, and having collected together a large, though irregular army of the Sicks, marched to attack Navab Vizier Khan, who was then at Sirhind, the seat of his government. Vizier Khan came out to give them battle with all the troops he had, and the armies coming to action near *Alwan Siray*,<sup>27</sup> the Sicks, inspired by enthusiasm and revenge, gave the Mussulmans a total defeat: Vizier Khan was killed upon the spot, and the greater part of his army was cut in pieces. Proceeding to the town of Sirhind, the Sicks put to death all the family of Vizier Khan, and every dependant and servant belonging to him.<sup>28</sup> Suchanund the Dewan, by whose advice the

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25. Guru Govind Singh stayed at Nanded, where Banda Singh (then known as Madho Das) had his monastery, for not more than a fortnight, from the last week of September to the 6th of October, 1708. It was during this period that he converted Madho Das into Banda Singh and despatched him to the Punjab.

26. Aurangzeb had died (28th Zi-l-qada, 1118 A.H., February 20, 1707) some nineteen months before the departure of Banda Singh for the Punjab.

27. According to more reliable authorities the battle of Sirhind was fought on the Chappar-Chri on 24th Rabi-ul-Awwal 1122 A.H., May 12, 1710.

28. The family of Wazir Khan had escaped unburnt. On the first receipt of the news of the death of his father and of the defeat of the Sirhind army, the eldest son of Wazir Khan had fled to Delhi with all his family. *Banda Singh Bahadur*, pp. 67-8.

children of Gooroo Gobind been murdered, was torn to pieces, with every circumstance of cruelty which savage revenge could dictate. After which, they destroyed all the mosques and tombs belonging to the Mussulmans;<sup>29</sup> and such was the terror which their severity and fury excited, that neither Hindoos nor Mussulmans found any means of safety, but in acknowledging and submitting to their authority, and professing to belong to their sect; which disposition, Bundah, who was a man of great art and address, encouraged by every means, with a view to increase his force: treating those with the most flattering kindness who came into the sect, and those who refused with unrelenting severity: so that in a short-time, all the districts from Paniput to near Lahore acknowledged the authority of the Sicks; and Behader Shah being then in the Deccan, with the Imperial army, there was no force in the provinces of Lahore, Dehly or Agra, able to undertake the reduction of the insurgents.

A.H. 1120. Behader Shah, having defeated his brother Kam Bucksh, A.D. 1708. was desirous of remaining some time longer in that part of his dominions,<sup>30</sup> in order to make a complete settlement of all the *Soubah's* (or provinces) of the Deccan; but when the advices arrived of Bundah's insurrection, and Vizier Khan's defeat and death, the danger appeared too pressing to admit of delay: he, therefore, determined to move with his whole force towards Sirhind, sending before him an advanced army of cavalry and artillery under the command of Sultan Kouly Khan, nephew of Rustum dil Khan;

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29. The allegation about the destruction of mosques is unfounded. 'The mausoleum of Ahmed Shah, the most magnificent of all such buildings,' wrote Gokal Chand Narang in 1912, 'still stands as it did before the battle, and is, I think, sufficient evidence of the exaggeration in Latif's statement, which nevertheless is corroborated by Khafi Khan.' *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 107, footnote.

30. The first news of the Sikh outbreak under the leadership of Banda Singh was received by the Emperor Bahadur Shah on the 2nd Rabi-ul-Sani, 1122 A.H., May 20, 1710, near Ajmer on his return from the Deccan after the completion of his successful expedition against his younger brother Muhammad Kam Bakhsh. At this time he was on his way to reduce the refractory Rajput chiefs Raja Jai Singh Kachhwaha and Raja Ajit Singh son of Raja Jaswant Singh Rathor. Kanwar Khan, *Tazkirat-us-Salatin*, p. 150; Irvine, *Later Mughals*, i., pp. 104-05.

to which he joined all the Mussulmans who had fled from Sirhind and other parts to avoid the fury of the Sicks. His Majesty ordered Sultan Kouly Khan to march by way of Dehly, and thereby stop the progress of the Sicks on that side, protecting the inhabitants as much as possible, to prevent the insurrection from spreading, and to put every man to the sword that he should find with his hair and beard at full length....that being the characteristic external of the Sicks.

Sultan Kouly Khan, with the zeal of a faithful servant, marched as expeditiously as possible, and having passed by way of Dehly, he came to Panipat; resolved to attack the Sicks, though his army was exceedingly weak, when compared with the prodigious force now gathered together under the enemy's standard. The Sicks on their part, being flushed with victory and confident in their numbers, were no less willing to come to action. The battle began, in which there was great slaughter on both sides, but especially on that of the Sicks, who being destitute of discipline, and unprovided with artillery, suffered very severely, when Kisury Singh Bucksy, to whom Bundah had given the command of this division of his army, being killed by an arrow, the Sicks began to give way, were at length totally defeated and the remainder of their army fled to join Bundah, who had remained with the rest of his forces at Sirhind. The next day, Sultan Kouly Khan being joined by a reinforcement sent after him by the Shah, under the command of the Vizier Khan Khanan, marched to Sirhind: Bundah drew up his army, which consisted of between forty and fifty thousand horse and foot, to receive the Mussulmans the battle was long and bloody, but, at length, the royal army making a desperate charge upon one part of the enemy's front broke through, and a general defeat ensued, with terrible slaughter of the Sicks. Bundah being unable to rally his disheartened troops, fled with as many as he could collect together, and took refuge in a strong fort called Loaghur (G) which stood near, Macawal, whither the royal army pursued them and surrounding the fort began to lay siege to it.

In the meantime, the Shah, hearing that Loaghur was invested marched on as expeditiously as possible, and without halting at Dehly,

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G. This place as well as some others mentioned in the History, having been totally destroyed, are not inserted in the map.



joined the camp of the Vizier and Sultan Kouly Khan, before Loaghur. By the time the siege had lasted a month, the besieged finding their provisions and ammunition fail them, and being determined to sell their lives as dear as possible, they sallied out of the fort sword in hand. A desperate, but unequal, conflict ensued; the greater part of the Sicks were cut in pieces on the spot, many were taken prisoners, in which number was their leader Bundah, who was confined in an iron cage, and together with the other prisoners was sent to Dehly, where they were all publicly executed, after having been offered their lives on condition of embracing the Mussulman faith, which they rejected with contempt.<sup>31</sup> The few remaining Sicks fled to the mountains, where they concealed themselves; and the Zemindars and Riots of the country who had joined them during their insurrection, partly to secure themselves, and partly for the sake of plunder, now cut off their beards and hair, and returned to their original occupations.

From this time, during the reigns of Behader Shah, Jehander Shah, Ferocksir, and the short reigns of Rafi al Dirjat, and his brother, Abdul Sumud Khan being Subadar of Lahore, none of this sect ever ventured to appear in arms; but concealed themselves by every means for near twelve years.<sup>32</sup>

A.H. 1131. In the year of the Hegira 1131, Mahammud Shah being A.D. 1718. on the throne, and Zekariah Khan being Subadar of Lahore, the Sicks, though unable to appear in any considerable force, began to plunder, and carry on a kind of predatory war in

31. In this and the previous paragraph the author has confusedly mixed the battles of Amingarh and Sirhind and of Sadhaura and Lohgarh during the reign of Emperor Bahadur Shah, and the seige of Sadaura and Lohgarh, the seige and fall of Gurdas Nangal and the massacre of Sikhs and Banda Singh at Delhi during the reign of Farrukh Siyar. For a detailed and connected account of these events the reader is referred to *Banda Singh Bahadur*, pp. 124-236.
32. The activities of the Sikhs were in no way slackened during the reigns of Emperors Bahadur Shah, Jahandar Shah and Farrukh Siyar. It was during the reign of Bahadur Shah, as we know, that the Sikhs, under the leadership of Banda Singh, conquered a greater part of the province of Lahore and practically the whole of the territory of Sirhind. During the reign of Jehandar Shah that they reconquered their capital of Lohgarh (Sadhaura) and re-established much of their power lost in the last days of 1710. And, it was during the reign of Farrukh Siyar that they struggled hard for the maintenance of their conquered territories which were then finally lost to them after the fall of Gurdas Nangal resulting in the capture of Banda Singh and his companions and their subsequent massacre at Delhi in March-June, 1716.

the skirts of the mountains, as if to try the temper of government; and this practice they continued with little variation for twenty years.

A.H. 1151. In the year of the Hegira 1151, Nadir Shah, the King A.D. 1738. of Persia, invaded Hindostan, and as his army committed dreadful ravages wherever they went, the inhabitants fled to the hills for safety, while the Subadars of the Provinces, being unable to resist, submitted to the invader.

On this occasion, the Sicks collecting together, began to commit depredations on all sides, possessing themselves of the property of the inhabitants who had fled to avoid the Persians, and plundering every place in their reach. At the same time they fortified themselves near a village called *Dullival*,<sup>33</sup> on the banks of the Ravy, where they were joined by many Zamindars, who had secretly favoured their sect, and now rejoiced to see it once in a condition to declare itself.

Some time after this, Nadir Shah returned to Persia, having plundered at Dehly wealth to an almost incredible amount, and, having bestowed the Empire of Hindostan on Mahammud Shah as his own free gift. He left behind him Nasir Khan, to collect the Subah of Cabul, and four Mahls (districts), belonging to the Subah of Lahore (being parts of the Empire of Hindostan, made over to him by the treaty with Mahammud Shah). The rest of the Subah of Lahore was continued under Zekariah Khan, as Subadar, on the part of Mahammud Shah, Zekariah Khan appointed Adina Beg Khan to be Foujdar of the *Doab of Bary*,<sup>34</sup> with order to reduce the Sicks to obedience.

The force he had with him was fully equal to the execution of that service, but Adina Beg, considering that if he should entirely put an end to all disturbances in that district, there would remain no necessity for continuing him in so extensive a command, he carried on intrigues with the chiefs of the Sicks, and secretly encouraged them to continue their depredations; at the same time, pretending to be very desirous of subduing them. From this management, the Sicks

33. The village of Dallewal, where the Sikhs built their first fort under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, is situated on the bank of the river Ravee.

34. Adina Beg Khan was appointed the Faujdar of Doaba Bist Jullundur lying between the rivers Beas and Satluj, comprising the present districts of Hoshiarpur and Jullundur.

became daily more powerful and seized upon several places in the distant parts of the Subah of Lahore. They also began again to perform public pilgrimages to the Holy Tank at *Amrutsur*, without molestation.

About this time, Zekariah Khan died, leaving two sons, the elder of whom was by the Shah appointed to succeed his father as Subadar of Lahore ; but disputes arising between the two brothers, the affairs of the Province became greatly neglected, and the Sicks increased in strength.

Some time before this, Nadir Shah having been assassinated in Persia, Ahmud Khan Durranny, one of his principal officers, established himself at Kandahar, and seized upon that province, in which he had considerable family connections ; at the same time laying claim to other (H) Provinces of Hindostan, which had been ceded to Nadir Shah by the treaty before mentioned, and assuming the title of Shah or King.

Soon after which, he seized upon Nasir Khan, whom Nadir Shah had left Subadar of Cabul (as said before), together with the treasure which he had collected from the time of Nadir Shah's return to Persia, being above a *crore* of rupees. He also demanded his daughter from him in marriage. Nasir Khan being then entirely in his power, consented and obtained liberty to go to his followers who were in *Paishawir*, under pretence of making the necessary preparations : he was obliged, however, to leave his son as hostage ; but as soon as he was at liberty, he considered the giving his daughter to a man of a different tribe, as a disgrace not to be submitted to, and therefore began to collect forces for his own defence. Yet some time after, Ahmud Shah Durranny, approaching him, though with a very inferior army, his followers A.H. 1159. dispersed, and Nasir Khan fled towards Dehly, which A.D. 1746. furnished Ahmud Shah Durranny with a plea for his first invasion of Hindostan. He accordingly passed the Attock, Jelum, and Chenab, and came to Lahore.

Shah Navaz Khan (one of the sons of Zekarian Khan), who was then Subadar of Lahore, immediately submitted,<sup>35</sup> and the Durranny

H. These were Cabul, Paishawar, and Tatta : in a word, every thing west of the Attock, or Indus.

35. It is Shah Nawaz Khan who invited Ahmad Shah Durrani to India, but on the persuasion of *Wazir* Qamar-ud-Din of Delhi, he decided to remain loyal to the Mughal Emperor. But when his lieutenant Jalhe Khan treacherously went over to the enemy and his general Asmat Beg Khan was defeated on the bank of the Ravi, Shah Nawaz Khan fled away to Delhi to save his own life leaving the city of Lahore being plundered by the legions of Ahmad Shah.

Shah entering the city of Lahore, seized upon the treasury and the armoury there, and proclaimed himself master of that Province also.

It is foreign from the design of this history, to enter into a detail of these events, which are all related in the general history of the empire; suffice it to say, that the Durranny Shah was at length obliged to return to Kandahar; and that in the year of the Hegira 1160,<sup>36</sup> A.H. 1160. Mahammud Shah having died, was succeeded by his A.D. 1747. son Ahmed Shah, who nominated *Mir Munnoo*, called *Moin-ul-Mullock*, son to the late Vizier *Kummer ul dien Khan*, to the Subadary of Lahore and Multan.

During these troubles, the Sick Chiefs Jessa Singh Kelal, Chirsah Sing, and Kirwar Sing,<sup>37</sup> had got together about 5000 horse; which army they (for the first time) gave the title of *Dul Khalsa Gee*, or the Army of the State and with which they made themselves masters of the *Doab of Bary*. Moin-ul-Mullock again appointed Adina Beg Khan to the Foudjary of that Doab, who marching thither, began as formerly to intrigue with the Sicks, and took no effectual means to suppress them. In one action<sup>38</sup> indeed, he defeated them, and killed about 600 Sicks;

36. According to more reliable accounts, Muhammad Shah died on 27th Rabi-us-Sani, 1161 A.H., April 15, 1748.
37. Sardar Jassa Singh, the founder of Ahluwalia *Misal*, was then the religious as well as secular leader of the *Dal Khalsa ji*, Charhat (Chirsa) Singh, the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was the head of the Sukkarchakkia *Misal*. Suha Singh, of Mari Kambo, was a hero of great fame. He had accompanied Mehtab Singh of Mirankot, when they set out from Bikaner to chastise *Massa Ranghar* for the desecration of the holy temple of Amritsar. He was killed at Lahore on the other side of the Ravi fighting against a detachment of Ahmad Shah Durrani during his third invasion of the Punjab during the Subedari of Mir Mannu. Karora Singh, the Sardar of the Karor Singhia *Misal*, was a leader of uncommon prowess and was a great silent worker in the organization of the *Buddha Dal* of the *Khalsa ji*.
38. In the absence of date and the place of this action it is difficult to say which particular battle the author here refers to. The *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg* also does not help us on this point. In all probability, it points to the siege of Ram Rauni, Amritsar, towards the close of 1748. In this siege the Sikhs were reduced to great extremities, but fortunately for them Ahmad Shah invaded India a second time, on the one side, and Shah Nawaz Khan supported by a large army from Delhi established himself at Mulan, a province also under the Subedari of Mir Mannu, on the other. On the advice of his Diwan, Kaura Mall, Mir Mannu ordered the siege of Ram Rauni to be raised, and the Sikhs were, therefore, left to themselves for a short time. For further particulars see Rattan Singh, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, pp. 401-04; Khushwaqt Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, pp. 67-68; Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, i, p. 129; Ganda Singh, *Maharaja Kaura Mall Bahadur*, pp. 22. *See Ahmad Shah Durrani*, pp. 72-80.

but as the confusion prevailing in the empire, had reduced thousands of people to distress, they were daily joining the Sicks for the sake of plunder, took the *Poil*, and let their hair grow, upon which they inrolled in the *Dul*, which now began to increase with surprising rapidity (1).

A.H. 1163. About three years after this, Ahmed Shah Durranny, A.D. 1750. again invaded Hindustan,<sup>39</sup> and having defeated Moin-ul-Mullock, seized on Lahore, levied a very heavy contribution from it, and afterwards appointed Moin ul Mullock to be Subadar on his part of Lahore and Multan, having given the daughter of Moin ul Mullock in marriage to his own son, the Prince Timur Shah : after this, the Duranny Shah returned to Kandahar.

During this war, Adina Beg Khan having joined Moin ul Mullock with all his forces, the Sicks had nothing left to oppose them, and therefore they daily became more formidable. They cut off the royal garrison in the Fort of Tanniser, destroyed the fort, and plundered all the neighbouring districts.

After the departure of the Durranny Shah, Moin ul Mullock again sent Adina Beg Khan against the Sicks, who seemed now to be inclined to discharge his duty with fidelity, for having received intelligence that they were assembled near Macowal,<sup>40</sup> to celebrate the festival of the *Hooly*, he, by a forced march, surprised them, and put so many of them to death, that the remainder were obliged to disperse for a while, but soon began to plunder again in small parties.

A.H. 1165. In the year of the Hegira 1165, Moin ul Mullock died, A.D. 1752. and his widow appointed one Beckary Khan to manage the government for her deceased husband as Naib (or deputy) on

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I, This naturally accounts for the rapid rise of the Sicks, which commenced about this time.

39. This was the third invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1751-52 when Mir Mannu suffered a defeat at the hands of the Durrani on March 6, 1752 (Jamadi-ul-Awwal 1, 1165 A.H., Chaitra Sudj 2, 1809 Bk.) after Kaura Mall had been shot dead by Bazid Khan, a Pathan of Kasur, at the instigation of Adina Beg Khan.

40. The action of Makhowal seems to have taken place on March 19-20, 1753, when the Sikhs were surprised by Adina Beg Khan on the Holi or Hola Muhalla day (Phalgun Puran-masi or Chet Vadi 1).

her part ; but having detected him in a design to seize on her person, and usurp the government himself, she caused him to be strangled ; and appointed Syed gumeil ul dien Khan to the office of her Naib.<sup>41</sup>

A short time after this, the troubles arising at Dehly, which ended in the Vizier Ghazi ul dien Khan's deposing Ahmed Shah, and raising to the throne Alungire Sani,<sup>42</sup> the reins of government become entirely relaxed, and the Sicks gathered new strength.

A.H. 1169. In the year of the Higira 1169, Ahmed Shah Durranny A. D. 1755. again invaded Hindostan, and came to Lahore. By this time, the Sicks were become very numerous, and their *Dul* was in the neighbourhood of Lahore ; but they were afraid to attack the Durranny army : however, they plundered all people who straggled from the camp, and cut off provisions going to it. But the Durranny Shah being desirous of getting as soon as possible to Dehly, took no notice of these insults.

After plundering Dehly, Muttra, and all the circumjacent towns and villages exercising unheard of barbarities, the Durranny Shah marched back to Kandahar, leaving a chief of the name of Ahmed Khan to command in Sirhind, and his own son, the Prince Timur Shah, with an army under the command of Jehan Khan, one of his best officers, to collect the Subahs of Lahore and Multan.<sup>43</sup>

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41. Mir Muin-ul-Mulk (Mir Mannu) died on the 7th of Muharram, 1167 A.H. November 4, 1753. He was succeeded by his infant son Muhammad Amin Khan as governor with Mir Momin Khan as his deputy. But the latter, though an experienced noble, was helpless as all power lay in the hands of the regent mother Mughlani Begam. There was all confusion after the death of Muhammad Amin Khan (end May, 1754) and it resulted in the appointment of Sayyad Jamil-ud-Din who replaced the Begam's uncle Khwaja Ubedullah Khan. (Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, ii, pp. 50-64: Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durani*, pp. 145-47.)

42. Alamgir II was placed on throne of Delhi by Ghazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk on June 2, 1754.

43. All this took place during the fourth Indian invasion of Ahmad Shah Durrani, November 1756—April 1757. (*Ahmad Shah Durrani*, pp. 148-49.)

Jehan Khan from a principle of religious zeal, destroyed the places of worship belonging to the Sicks at *Amrutsur*, and filled up the sacred Tank, which they so highly venerate: upon which the Sicks collected together under their chiefs from all quarters, and blocking the city of Lahore, collected the revenues of the country all round for their own use. Jehan Khan with the Prince, marched out to give them battle but after several actions, finding the Sicks too numerous for him to contend with, he retreated to Kandahar.<sup>44</sup>

Upon this occasion, Jessa Sing Kelal, who was at the time commander-in-chief of the *Dul*, struck rupees in his own name, at the royal mint at Lahore, with the following inscription, "Jessa Kelal conquered the country of Ahmed, and struck this coin by the grace of God."<sup>45</sup>

After the retreat of Jehan Khan, the Court of Delhy appointed Adina Beg Khan to be Subadar of Lahore;<sup>46</sup> but the force with which he was furnished by so weak a government was not equal to encountering the Sicks; he was therefore obliged to stop at Sirhind; that he could not obtain any assistance from the administration at Delhy, he applied to the Marhatta chief Rogonaut Row, who at that time commanded a large army in the Province of Agra, and offered to assist him in reducing Punjab, to which the Marhatta chief agreed, and marched to Sirhind; where he was joined by Adina Beg Khan with his own army, and some of the inferior Sick chiefs, whom he had brought over by great promises.<sup>47</sup>

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44. Taimur Shah and Jahan Khan stayed in the Punjab for only one year, May 1757 to April 1758. On the 19th of April, 1758, they left for Afghanistan, having been pushed out of the country by the combined efforts of the Sikhs and the Marathas.

45. See footnote 8 of *Introduction*.

46. Adina Beg Khan was not appointed the Subehdar by the Court of Delhi but he became governor (after Prince Taimur and Jahan Khan had left the Punjab) under an agreement to pay seventy five lakhs of rupees annually to the Marathas.

47. The Marathas and the Sikhs were invited by Adina Beg Khan early in 1758 to expell Prince Taimur and Sardar Jahan Khan.

Their first operation was to expel and plunder Ahmed Khan,<sup>48</sup> whom the Durranny Shah had left to command in Sirhind. On this occasion, the Sick Chiefs, who had joined Adina Beg Khan plundered the town of Sirhind which gave great offence to the Marhatta Chiefs, who projected falling upon the Sicks, and plundering them in return: which coming to the knowledge of Adina Beg Khan, by whose influence these Sicks had been induced to join the Marhattas, he gave them immediate notice of the design which was formed against them, upon which they marched away in the night.<sup>49</sup>

The Sick leaders who were in possession of Lahore, did not think their army a match for the Marhattas, when reinforced by Adina Beg Khan, they therefore drew off to the skirts of the mountains; and the Marhattas established garrisons in Lahore, Multan, &c. But their government was of short duration, for soon after this, attempting to expel the Rohillas from their possession, Nujeeb ul Doulah, the principal Rohilla chief, applied to the Durranny Shah for assistance: alleging that being his subjects, (K) they could apply to none else for redress, and that, therefore, they entreated he would support them against the infidels.

Ahmad Shah Durranny accordingly left Kandahar, with his whole force, and as soon it was known that he had crossed the Attock, all the Marhatta garrisons in Lahore and Multan fled without waiting for his nearer approach.

A. H. 1172. The Vizier Ghazi ul dien Khan, who kept his Majesty A. D. 1758. Alungire Sani as a prisoner in his own palace, expecting that the Durranny Shah would call him to a severe account, if Alungire Sani should complain to him; in a transport of rage and despair he put him to death: and after placing another of the royal line upon the throne by the title of Shah Jehan Sani, he left Dehly with all his forces

48. It was Abdus-Samad Khan (and not Ahmad Khan) who had been left by Ahmad Shah Durrani at Sirhind. The place was captured on the 21st March and the Sikhs were the first to enter it.

49. The Sikhs did not march away from Sirhind leaving Adina Beg Khan alone with the Marathas. But, "It was then agreed that, as there was a fear of collision between the warrior peoples, the Sikhs, who numbered about fifteen thousand, should always keep two stages ahead of the Marathas in their march upon Lahore." (*Ahmad Shah Durrani*, p. 201.)

Note K. All the Rohilla tribes come from the country belonging to the Durranny Shah, and those settled in Hindostan, still call him their king.



and joined the Mahratta army which was then besieging the Rohillas at *Suketall*.

The events of this campaign are foreign to our subject; it is only necessary to say that the Durrany Shah having raised the siege of Suke-tall and defeated the Mahratta chiefs Junkoo and Mulhar Row in several actions, in one of which Dattea Pateel (the elder brother of Mahado Row Sindea) was killed,<sup>50</sup> and being joined by all the Rohilla chiefs, as also by the Navab Shuja ul Dowla, cantoned for the rainy season near *Coel* in the Doab, between the Ganges and the Jumna.

A.H. 1173. While Ahmed Shah Durrany remained at Coel, he A.D. 1759. received advice that Adina Beg Khan whom he had once more appointed Subadar of Lahore, was dead,<sup>51</sup> and that the Sicks, taking advantage of that event, had assembled in great numbers, attacked and defeated *Sumbu Das*,<sup>52</sup> the Dewan of Adina Beg Khan, who after his master's death had attempted to keep things in order. On this intelligence, the Durrany Shah appointed Zien Khan to be Foujdar of Sirhind, and Bullund Khan to be Subadar of Lahore, and despatched them to their stations with an army of 10,000 horse.

A.H. 1173. The conclusion of the rains was followed by that famous A.D. 1759. campaign, which put to final trial the grand question of *Empire* between the Mussulmans, and the Mahrattas, and ending by the fatal battle of Paniput, which was fought on the 20th of Jemad A.H. 1174. ul Sani 1174,<sup>53</sup> decided it in favour of the Mussulmans, A.D. 1760. and gave a blow to the Mahratta power, which it has not entirely recovered yet.

After this, Ahmed Shah Durrany, having settled the government at Dehly in the hands of Nujeib ul Doula, and placed *Mirza Jewan Buckt* on the throne, as representative of his father *Shah Alum*, who was then in Bengal, he marched back towards Kandahar.

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50. Dattaji Patil was killed in the battle of Barari ghat, January 9, 1760.

51. Adina Beg Khan had died on September 15, 1758, some fourteen months before Ahmad Shah Durrani descended upon the Punjab for the fifth time in November 1759. There was, therefore, no occasion for him to appoint Adina Beg Subedar of Lahore.

52. This should be Bishambhar Das.

53. 20th Jamadi-us-Sani, corresponds to January 17, 1761. The battle of Panipat was, in fact, fought on January 14, 1761.

As soon as he had passed the Sutledge, the Sicks began to plunder the stragglers from his camp, which he forebore to resent at that time, his army being loaded with plunder; however, to secure his camp from insult, he every night threw up a slight work round it, and in this manner he continued his march to the Attock, the Sicks following him all the way.

When the Durrany army had passed the Attock, the Sicks returned, and having blockaded Lahore, they compelled Bullund Khan to retreat with his garrison, upon which they took possession of that city, and all the country from the Attock to Sirhind.

A.H. 1174. However, Zein Khan, whom the Durrany Shah had left A.D. 1760. Foujdar of Sirhind, being assisted by Hinghun Khan,<sup>54</sup> a pattan chief, of the district of Malnair (south west from Sirhind) still supported himself against them.

A H. 1175. The following year, the Sicks to the number of about A.D. 1761. forty thousand horse, ravaged the whole territory of Malnair, in revenge for the assistance given by Hinghun Khan to the Durrany Aumil; but soon after Ahmed Shah Durrany having marched to Lahore, to punish the Sicks, for having expelled Bullund Khan, Hinghun Khan contrived in the night to escape, and fled to the Durrany camp for protection. The Durrany Shah sent thirty thousand horse under his conduct, who marching seventy crores (one hundred and forty miles) almost without (L) intermission, surprized the army of the Sicks, at a place called *Barnala*, and put great numbers to the sword;<sup>55</sup>

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54. This should be Bheekhan Khan. *Hinghun* is an incorrect reading of the name in the Persian manuscript.

Note L. The horses used by the Durrannies, are of the breed called Turki; they are not large, but the most useful, quiet, and best bottomed horses, that are I believe in the world. They live to a great age, so that I have seen horses in the use of common troopers that they have declared to be near forty years old.

55. This action, called *Wadda Ghalughara* by the Sikh historians is believed to have been fought near the villages of Kup and Raheera, in the erstwhile Malerkotla state, on the 11th of Rajjab, 1175 A. H., February 5, 1762, when about ten thousand Sikhs lives mostly women, children and old men, are said to have been lost. (*Ahmad Shah Durani*, pp. 273-80.)

the rest as usual, dispersed for a time ; after which, the Shah proceeded to Sirhind, where he was met by Nujeib ul Dowla, and the other principal Omrahs; and having received their compliments, returned to Kandahar, leaving Saudet Yab Khan, one of his officers with a large detachment in the Doab of Beit Jalinder, and Rajah Cabully Mul as Subadar of Lahore.

A.H. 1176. The beginning of the following year, the Sicks assembling again, drove Rajah Cabully Mul out of Lahore, and Saudet Yab Khan, from the Doab of Beit Jalinder, establishing themselves in both those places ; after which they invaded Malnair,<sup>56</sup> defeated and killed Hinghun Khan,<sup>57</sup> a man of great courage and ability, who had long been a considerable check to their progress in that quarter.

A.H. 1176. They next attacked Sirhind, and coming to action with A.D. 1762. Zien Khan, the Durrany Foujdar, near Rajah Seray, defeated and killed him also; after which they plundered and burnt Sirhind, having particular enthusiastick hatred to that place, on account of the Gooroo Gobind's children, which was perpetrated there. By these successes, the whole country from the Karnal, acknowledged the authority of the Sicks.

A.H. 1177. The following year, Nujeib ul Dowla being engaged in a A.D. 1763. war with *Surujh Mul*, the Rajah of the Jauts, the Sick chiefs, Koshial Sing, Bugheil Sing, Sahib Sing, Baug Singh, Kurrum Sing, and Roy Sing, crossed the Jumna with their forces, and plundered the district of Saharunpoor belonging to Nujeib ul Dowla ; upon which that chief immediately marched to protect his own country, and partly by force, partly by negotiation, got the Sicks to repass the Jumna.

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56. Maler (Kotla) and not Malner.

57. As after the death and defeat of Zain Khan on January 14, 1764, no Sikh Sardar would accept the accursed city of Sirhind on account of its evil associations, the leading residents were invited to choose their own master. They declared in favour of Bhai Buddha Singh (son of Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh, a descendant of Bhai Bhagtu), elder brother of Bhai Desu Singh of Kaithal. Thus was Sirhind assigned (*ardasa karwa ditta gia*) to Bhai Buddha Singh with a religious prayer. It was, however, later on purchased by Sardar Ala Singh of Patiala for twenty-five thousand rupees.

A.H. 1178. The next year Jewar Singh, the son and successor of  
A.D. 1764. *Surugh Mul*,<sup>58</sup> in order to revenge the death of his  
father, who had been killed the year before in battle against Nujeib  
ul Dowla, collected together all his own followers, and being reinforced  
by thirty thousand Mahrattas under Mulhar Row, and twenty-five  
thousand Sicks under several different chiefs, laid seige to the city of  
Dehly. The seige lasted three months, in which time Nujeib ul Dowla,  
having written advice of his situation to Ahmed Shah Durrany, and  
solicited his aid, his Majesty immediately marched from Cabul where  
he then was, and to avoid any interruption from the Sicks, he  
proceeded along the skirts of the mountains, and had reached as far  
as *Gurry Kotanah*, when a peace was concluded between Nujeib ul  
Dowla and Jewar Singh, through the mediation of Mulhar Row, and  
the seige of Dehly was raised. Nujeib ul Dowla immediately sent  
intelligence of this to the Durrany Shah, and after expressing his  
gratitude for the ready assistance his Majesty had afforded him,  
he entreated him to return from the place which he was then at, lest  
the arrival of his army in the neighbourhood of Dehly should renew  
A.H. 1178. the calamities of this unhappy city. The Durrany Shah  
A.D. 1764. according to this address, repassed the Sutledge,  
and marched back towards his own country by the Lahore  
road.

In the meantime, the Sick chiefs determined to revenge the  
defeat they had suffered at Barnala, assembled their whole force at  
Amrutsur, to the number of sixty thousand horse and foot; and took  
an oath to exert every effort to cut off the Shah's army. Ahmed Shah  
Durrany receiving advice of this, sent a person to the Sick leaders  
in quality of Ambassador, to negotiate a peace with them, and  
prevent that effusion of blood, which their desperate determination  
threatened to produce, but on the arrival of this person in the camp of  
the Sicks, instead of listening to his proposals, they plundered him  
and his followers, and drove them away. Ahmed Shah Durrany  
finding all accomodation impossible, marched immediately to give  
battle to the Sicks; and coming to Amrutsur in the evening, encamped  
close to the enemy. In the morning the Sicks drew up their army on

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58. The Jat Raja of Bharatur.

foot, and immediately proceeded to attack the Durrannies sword in hand and the Durrannies, with equal resolution, received their attack on foot also. The battle was long and bloody, and the loss so great on both sides, that at length both armies drew off to their respective camps; the next morning neither party was inclined to renew the conflict, and the Shah resumed his march without any further interruption (M).

Some time after this, Ahmed Shah Durrany died,<sup>59</sup> and was succeeded by his son the Prince Timur Shah, who has been too much employed on the side of Persia in keeping possession of the provinces usurped by his father from that empire, to have leisure for attempting to reduce the power of the Sicks. Nor has any Potentate yet appeared on the side of Hindostan, equal to such a task;  
 A.H. 1178. some feeble attempts have been made, which have only  
 A.D. 1764. confirmed the strength of the Sick Government, as a little water thrown on a fire, does but increase its heat ; so that for twenty years past, they have employed themselves in completely reducing the whole country from Attock to Karnal, and dividing it among their own sect.

Soon after the last expulsion of the Aumils of the Durranny Shah, the Sicks held a general Diet at Amrutsur, in which they determined to call in the rupees which were struck in the name of Jessa Kelal, and to strike them for the future in the name of their *Gooroos*, with an inscription to this effect, "*Gooroo Gobind Sing* received from Nanuck, the Daig (N), the sword and rapid victory,"<sup>60</sup> which coin is current throughout their dominions to this day.

Thus has the Divine pleasure, notified to Gooroo Gobind, been at the length fulfilled; and thus has Providence raised up this sect in consideration of the piety and charity of Gooroo Nanuck, its founder, that mankind beholding the reward of virtue, may learn to practise it.

Thus far the Persian manuscript extends; to which I beg leave to add that the Sicks are the only one of the many powers who have enriched themselves out of the many spoils of the Mogul Empire, which

Note M. It is to be supposed, that in a battle thus disputed, both sides claimed the victory; the Durrannies bring in proof, their having marched on unmolested; the Sicks, that the Durranny Shah never again returned to Lahore.

59. Ahmed Shah Durrani died on October 16-17 (Night), 1772.

Note N. This has been explained in the Introduction. I have several of these rupees in my possession.

60. See footnote 8 of *Introduction* of author.

fairly and openly avows its independence. They will not suffer the name of his Majesty Shah Alum to appear upon their coin; but have substituted that of their Góoroo; and instead of the King's reign, and of the Hegira, which is the established date on all the coins throughout the empire, they use the era of *Bickermajeet*, called the *Sumbut*.

1779: After Ahmed Shāh Durrany returned to Kandahar in 1764, as has been related, though the Sicks possessed themselves of the town and province of Lahore, and of all the open country of Multan, yet the Durrany garrison of Multan still remained in that fortress till the death of Ahmed Shah Durrany: soon after which, the Sicks compelled them to retire, and placed a garrison of their own there. But in the year 1779, Timur Shah (the successor to Ahmed Shah Durrany) came from Cabul, with a large army, and laying siege to Multan, took it, after defeating the army sent by the Sicks to raise the siege: when he returned to Cabul leaving a garrison in Multan, which has remained there ever since.

1785: Since the complete settlement of the Sicks in their present possessions, which was not entirely effected till near the year 1770, the chiefs to the westward of the Sutledge, who are the most powerful, have not been engaged in any important expedition, till the year 1785, when they invaded the Rajah of Jumboo, and compelled him to pay them tribute.

The incursions which made annually into the territories lately belonging to Zabita Khan, are merely effected by a temporary confederacy of the chiefs between the Sutledge and the Jumna.

These incursions are sometimes carried across the Ganges (O) into the Vizier's territories, as happened in March 1785, when a large body of Sicks passed over, and remained in that country several days, plundering to an immense amount, and burning and destroying the villages without opposition, though repeated advice had been received beforehand of their designs. But these insults may always be prevented by common attention in the Vizier's administration, and by sending proper detachments to the several fords of the Ganges during the dry season.

In 1785, Mahadjee Scindea (having seized on the Shah's person, and the entire administration of his affairs) entered into an alliance with the leaders of the Sicks, between the Sutledge and the Jumna, both offensive and defensive: one of the articles of which treaty expres-

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Note O. From the middle of March till June, the Ganges is fordable in several places between the falls at Hardwar and the town of Ferockabad.

sly says as follows:- 'Besides the royal lands, whatever shall be acquired by either party (Scindea or the Sicks) with mutual consent, *on either side the Jumna*, from Hindoos or Mussulmans, one third thereof shall belong to the *Khalsah Gee*' (the Sick State). This clearly points at the Vizier's country.<sup>61</sup>

As soon as this treaty was framed, I obtained a copy of it, which I transmitted to Mr. Macpherson, then acting as Governor-General, April the 9th. What use he made of the information, I cannot tell: but surely a confederacy of two such formidable powers as the Sicks and Mahrattas, close to the Vizier's frontier, must afford matter for very serious apprehension to every person who is anxious for the safety of the Company's possessions in India, which are so intimately connected with those of the Vizier, that prosperity or calamity must be in common to them both.

In this point of view, I beg leave to conclude this sketch, with my earnest recommendation of that circumstance to the attention of the Company's administration, for even admitting all that the advocates for Scindea can say of his sincerity, he is but mortal; and with him will expire all that security which has been supposed to arise from his personal character.

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61. See my article on *The Maratha-Sikh Treaty of 1785*. (*Pro. Ind. Hist. Congress* 1939, Calcutta.)

THE HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE SICKS

A list of Sick Sirdars, with the places of their Residence, and the number of their forces —

Place of Residence	of Sirdar Name	Horse	Foot	Total	Remarks
Karnawl (Karnal)	Rajah Gudgeput Sing (Gajpat Singh)	1,500	500		
Tannasar (Thanesar)	Baug Singh Bunga Sing (Bhag Singh Bhanga Singh)	750	250		
Shawbad (Shahabad)	(Currum Sing Nermulla (Karam Singh Nirmala)	750	250		
Amballa	Gurdut Sing (Gurdit Singh)	750	250		
Sirhind	Jussa Sing (Jassa Singh)	1,500	500		
Conna Serai (Khanna)	Sonde Singh	225	75		
Pail Serai					From the Jumna to the Sutlege
Boria (Buria)	Hurre Sing Duluval (Hari Singh Dalle wali)	1,500	500		
Secundra	Rai Sing Baug Sing	750	250		
Damla	Dewan Singh Lung	750	250		
Beboin	Dulcha Sing	750	250		
Gurry Cotana	Gordut Sing	150	50		
Monimajera	Hucumut Sing	375	125		
Pehova	Buget Sing	1,125	375		
Curta	Desu Sing	1,500	500		
Futtiabed	Dunna Sing	4,500	1500		
Natta	Rajah Sahib Sing Hamir Sing	600	200		
		18,225	6,075	24,300	
Nurmehal	Bughel Singh	750	250		
Necoder	Tarra Singh Gaiba	2,250	750		
Tute Serai	Jusa Sing	3,000	1,000		
Catta	Tarra Singh Caker	375	125		



Ghur Samger (Garh Shankar)	Cuseal Sing (Khushal Singh)	150	50		Doaba of Beit
Jeledur (Jallandhar)	Ma Sing	750	250		Jalinder
Capure Tulla (Kapurthala)	Jessa Sing	3,000	1,000		
		10,275	3,425	13,700	
Lahore	Guger Sing				
	Soba Sing	22,150	8,050	30,200	Doaba of Bary
	Lina Sing				
Shah Dera	Maha Sing	15,000	5,000	20,000	Doaba of Retchena
Gujerat	Guger Sing	7,500	2,500	10,000	Doabes of Jenhat and Sind Sagur
Shah Doula					
Rotasgur	Maha Sing				
		73,150	25,050	98,200	

## Some Aspects of Agrarian Structure of Punjab during the Eighteenth Century

ANEETA RANI\*

The province of Punjab played a vital and significant role not merely in the political history but too in the economic history of India. Even during the twilight of the grand anarchy in the first half of the eighteenth century, this province had a very sound economic conditions and its economy in general has been often considered as one of settled agriculture, and petty commodity production.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, agriculture was the largest, the oldest and the most important industry in the Punjab and it has ever been the mainstay of the economic life of the people in this province; the major portion of population was engaged in agriculture. They produced enough to meet their own needs and also the needs of the whole of the Punjab. Even the surplus was exported to the foreign countries as some of the countries round the Persian Gulf managed their entire food supply through imports.<sup>2</sup>

There were two stretches of land, the economy of which played a vital role in the progress of Punjab. The first of these in the north and north-east extended from Jhelum to Sirhind. It was a tract of high rainfall, and provided conditions conducive to relatively advanced agricultural practices.<sup>3</sup> The use of wells for irrigation was wide-spread as was the knowledge of the Persian wheel for raising water from these

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\*84 B, Upkar Nagar, Patiala.

1. Muhommad Akbar, *Punjab Under the Mughals, Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi*, Delhi, 1974, p. 211; Latif, S. M., *History of the Panjab*, Delhi, 1964, p. 192; Nijjar, Bakshish Singh, *Punjab Under the Great Mughals 1526-1707*, Delhi, 1968, p. 132 (in describing the economy of Punjab in fact innumerate the characteristic of only one though dominant system of production. Though there is lack of evidence, such an outcome seems almost inevitable).
2. Ashraf, K. M., *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, Delhi, 1970, p. 144; Nijjar, B. S., *Punjab Under the Later Mughals*, Jullundur, 1972, p. 209.
3. Refer, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XX, 257,

wells.<sup>4</sup> There too existed a system of canals, which further enhanced the proportion of the productivity of land.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that a reasonable proportion of the cultivated land in this part was double cropped. The second stretch of land which was nicely cultivated and cropped lay between Ravi and Satluj rivers.<sup>6</sup> The rain was naturally favoured by river channels which facilitated irrigation. The importance attached to the maintenance of canals upon the value of cultivation of land in this region.<sup>7</sup> We may add the words of Manrique who observes that it was well populated by settled agriculturists;<sup>8</sup> and the high grade cash crops for which Punjab was well known were in all probability in these two blocks of land. As a result of the favourable conditions these territories made the largest contribution to the agricultural production.<sup>9</sup> It appears that even some parts of Sarkar Hisar-Feroza were marked by similarly advanced agricultural methods which quite obviously affected cultivation in the adjoining area.<sup>10</sup>

Before eighteenth century, in the holding of land it was the question as to who was the owner of the soil—the ruler or the peasant? The ancient Hindu law gave the proprietary rights to the cultivator, basing on the dictum that land belonged to him who cleared

4. Regarding the use and utility of wells for irrigation, see Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarnett, H.S. (tr.), Calcutta, 1901, Vol. II, 316; Manucci, Niccolao, *Storia Do Megor*, William Irwin (tr.), Calcutta, 1965, Vol. II, p. 174. (Also see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India : 1556-1707*, Bombay, 1963; Beveridge, A. S. (tr.), *Baburnama*, Delhi, 1970, p. 436; Bhandari, Sujan Rai, *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* in Sarkar Jadunath (tr.), *India of Aurangzeb*, Calcutta, 1901, p. 110).
5. Bhandari, Sujan Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.
6. Elliot, H.M. and Dowson, J., *History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, Delhi, 1964. (The region has been cultivated since early times. In Akbar's time, it also included the pargana of Ferozpur which Abul Fazl mentions in *Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarrett, (tr.), Vol. II, p. 335. As having a fairly big measured area and revenue, some parts of this region remained uncultivated).
7. Habib, Irfan, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
8. Fray Sebastian Manrique, Maciagan, E. D. (Tr.), 'The Travels of Fray Sebastian Manrique in the Panjab, 1641,' *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. II, October 1968, p. 257.
9. Bhandari, Sujan Rai, p. 110 (He refers to the utility and excellence of these high grade products of Punjab).
10. Habib, Irfan, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32 (For more details see Badaoni, Abdul Qadir, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, George, S. A. Ranking (Tr.), Vol. II; Lowe, W. H. (Tr.), Vol. III; Wolseley, Hague (Tr.), Patna, 1973, p. 274. The digging of the canal in this area was the cause of large editions to the cultivated area and a great increase in the prosperity of the people).

away the timber and the deer belonged to him who first wounded it with an arrow.<sup>11</sup> However, because of the conquest and territorial aggrandisement new masters claimed the right of the conquest. After conquest, the conqueror acquired the right of ownership of house, lands, people and taxation. But actually the ownership of land would still be vested in the cultivators. When the new rulers gave gift of land it merely implied creation of allowances or giving away a part of the tax, which he had received by his claim of conquest.<sup>12</sup> The land was not rulers' wealth. Besides, in the land there was the commonwealth of all living beings to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Therefore, while there could be no gift of the great land (*Mahabhumi*<sup>13</sup>) the proprietorship of the land was vested in private individuals not merely in theory but in actual practice as well.

The proprietary right of the cultivators in the soil was fully recognised and the merchants paid due respect to the inherent right of the cultivators. If the cultivators refused or failed to cultivate or could not perform his duty towards the society, it became the duty of the ruler to extend his assistance to the society.<sup>14</sup> Thus compulsion on the cultivator was not because he was a slave of the ruler but because he was to contribute his share to the society of which he was a member and the ruler was the trustee entrusted with the task of its preservation. It was necessary for the ruler to maintain law and order, if royalty did not exist he would lose its prosperity and the whole earth would become barren waste.<sup>15</sup> Hence, it became essential for the ruler to have sources at his command with which he could extend protection and do justice. This he could do only by getting the taxes from the people. The peasants paid land revenue by way of rent for making use of the royal property.<sup>16</sup>

It is said that the ruler was the proprietor of every acre of land excepting perhaps some houses and gardens which he sometimes allowed his subject to buy, sell or otherwise dispose of among themselves.<sup>17</sup> It is to be noted that there was quite a difference between the *Jagirdari* system and the ownership of land. Peasants had the hereditary proprietorship of land and their land was untransferable whereas the *Jagirs* were transferable. The assignment of *Jagirs* was in return for their services rendered to the ruler.<sup>18</sup>

11. *Manu Smriti*, Chapter X, Verse 44.

12. Jayaswal, K. P., *Hindu Polity*, 1924, p. 332.

13. Habib, Irfan *op. cit.*, p. 114; Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

14. Day, U. N., *The Mughal Government*, Delhi, 1969, p. 99.

15. *Ain-i-Akbari* (Bloch), Vol. I, p. 2.

16. Habib, Irfan, *op. cit.*, p. III.

17. Bernier, *Travels in Mughal Empire*, p. 204.

18. Saran, P., *The Provincial Government of the Mughals* (ed. 1973), p. 331.

Thus the Muslim conquerors were regarded defacto owners as to claim the superior ownership of every acre of their dominion. The Government fully recognised the property right of the cultivator in the soil. While the peasant was recognised as the owner of the soil, he was not free to alienate it or use it in a manner he liked. If in one sense, the land belonged to the peasant, then in another the peasant belonged to the land.<sup>19</sup>

It will not be out of place if we discuss *Jagirdari* system here at some length. It formed a powerful class in those days. Even the Lahore *darbar* did not interfere normally if the *Jagirs* were sold out or given away by the *Jagirdars* in dowry at the marriage of their daughters.<sup>20</sup> The *Jagirdars* enjoyed considerable powers and privileges. It would not be wrong to describe their estates as small set ups within the Lahore Kingdom.<sup>21</sup> These *Jagirs* may conveniently be classified into different categories according to the nature of their land tenures. But these *jagirs* have not been classified by Persian terminology in the contemporary or near contemporary records. The term *jagir* has been used in general for all kinds of land holdings without specifying them. The only exceptions were the *misdari jagirs* and *Dharmarth jagirs*. A study of the Persian and English sources on the land revenue administration and the *jagirdari* system of the Sikh state convey that the *jagirdari* land tenures in Ranjit Singh's time may be categorised and termed as *misdari jagir*, service *jagir*, pay *jagir*, *dharmarth jagir* and special *jagir*. Besides these several types of *jagirdari* holdings, there was a number of other small *jagirs* in existence. These land tenure differed from each other in several respects.

Most of the *jagirs* during the regime of Ranjit Singh belonged to the Sikh Sardars who were remanants of eighteenth century Sikh *Misls*, and had ruled the Punjab under the banner of the *Khalsa* Commonwealth.<sup>22</sup> We know it well that the Sikh *Misls* originated during the first decade of the second half of the eighteenth century. During the span of struggle with the Mughals and the Afghans, the Sikh military leaders conquered large tracts of land and established their sway over the conquered *ilagas* and villages and converted them

19. Powell Baden, *The Indian Village Community*, London, 1896, p. 209; Habib Irfan, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

20. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Delhi, 1978 (See Thesis presented to the Punjabi University, Patiala for the Ph. D. Degree, pp. 397-98).

21. Trevaskis, H. R., *The Land of the Five Rivers*, Oxford, 1928, p. 177.

22. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

into their private and hereditary possessions. Although Ranjit Singh had subjugated most of them and had changed their status from that of his equals into his vassals, yet it was difficult as well as dangerous to deprive the *milsdar* sardars of their estates which they enjoyed so far.<sup>23</sup> However, it is noteworthy to state that in the earlier part of the eighteenth century the Sikhs formed predominantly a classless society as most of them were peasants, while the contemporary society and preponderantly feudal in character in the country.<sup>24</sup> And, during the *Misls* but with Ranjit Singh advent, the system of *jagirs* was revived and soon various *jagirs* existed.<sup>25</sup> In fact, there was a continuity of the Mughal tradition; but unrestrained growth of feudalism led to the decline of the Sikh power in the Punjab ultimately.

The land tenure system of Punjab was already characterized by small peasant agricultural holding cultivated under proprietary or occupancy rights. The development of this system commenced in the eighteenth century, when great political, social and religious change took place. This system became institutionalized in the first half of the nineteenth century, with the land revenue settlement introduced by the British, and having undergone shifts resulting from British policy and commercial development, it became the established pattern of land ownership in Punjab. In Punjab as well as in other regions of the country the key institution of the establishment of the land ownership as understood in modern sense was the land revenue settlement. Private land with market value was not prevalent before the British control. Before the arrival of the British, peasants cultivated land individually, but their rights over the land were defined and limited by the social structure of the village communities. Different land tenures based on private ownership developed in all parts of India under British rule.

The village dominance of cultivator castes, typified by *jats*, and the weak position of superior land proprietors, including even agrarian elites in the Mughal empire and in the Sikh regime, distinguished the agrarian structure of the mid 19th century Punjab. The historians have different explanations for the formation of this type of land tenure.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, pp. 50-53.

25. For further details see Grewal, J. S., *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh* : Essays in Sikh History, Amritsar; Sethi, R. R., *Monographs on John Lawrence as Commissioner of Jullundur Doab 1846-49*, Punjab Government Record Office, Lahore, 1930, *Monograph* No. 10, p. 45.

Trevaskis attributes *Jat* peasants dominance to *Jat* tribal traditions, and the weakness of superior proprietors to the sudden demise of Mughal power, which did not have time for local power to establish superior land rights. He argues that Punjab's history comprised a series in successive invasions from central Asia. *Jats*, *Rajputs*, *Pathans* and *Buloches* had migrated into the Punjab with nomadic, tribal traditions, which they maintained upto 1849, because of their relatively recent settlement as agriculturists. Hence, Punjab's social structure at the village level was closer to that of central Asia. They occupied the land and imposed their tribal organisation on the original inhabitants, who became their tenants. Of course, they did try to keep some equality among themselves as share holders in land around their villages.<sup>26</sup>

After Trevaskis and Denzil Ibbetson, writers spent several pages on this subject in Gazetteers and historical literature. In modern time, historians like Irfan Habib and W.H. McLeod have also explained *Jat* social structure by referring to their origin.<sup>27</sup> The British writers perhaps overlooked the changes caused by social, political and religious movements during the period after these tribes had been settled down.

Trevaskis observation about the deplorable and feeble position of *Talukadars* and *Zamindars*, that the sudden decline of the Mughal power in Punjab left no time for the growth and development of superior land rights is neither convincing nor acceptable. We are aware that the Mughal power broke down in the Punjab some time in the mid-eighteenth century and the British came to power in 1848-49. The intervening period of more than a century was characterised by the rise of Sikh power and ultimate authority. Hence, the Sikh rule could well have been responsible for the agrarian structure of rural Punjab on the eve of Punjab annexation by the British.

The most important feature of this period, of agrarian structure as points out Tom Kessinger, a century rule of the Sikh removed a layer of *Zamindars*, who were mostly Muslim Rajputs. They were deprived of rights over the land because they were both political foes of the Sikh power and representatives of a competing religion. Even in

26. For more details see, Trevaskis, H.K., *The Land of the Five Rivers*, Oxford, 1928.

27. For further details see McLeod, W. H., *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford, 1976, p. 11; Habib Irfan, 'Presidential Address,' *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference*, 1971, Patiala, pp. 44-54.

the first half of the nineteenth century the *Zamindari* was not encouraged and also the Lahore *darbar* limited the growth of a new class of *Zamindars* on the local level.<sup>28</sup> Thus the credit goes to the Sikh political movement which made the *Zamindars* of high caste status to disappear. Equally goes the credit to Islamic religious ties for it.<sup>29</sup>

The Sikh political movement which exerted its impact on Punjab agrarian system, started under conditions particularly favourable to *Jat* peasants. In fact, this dominance on the village level was established long before the Sikhs took power in the Punjab. *Jats* were densely settled in central Punjab and Multan. They were controlling local resources—land, labour and irrigation—as major cultivators.<sup>30</sup> Most of them were Sikhs but some of them were Muslims also. The rise of Sikh power due to Afghan invasions proved fatal to Rajput *Zamindars* who represented the Mughal power in the Punjab. They like the *Jats* were old inhabitants of the Punjab but Rajputs became quite different social group because of the careers they opted.<sup>31</sup>

The Rajput *Zamindars* role as agents of Mughal power could have developed into proprietorship over the villages under their responsibility, had not the Afghan invasions created new opportunities for Sikh *Jats*. While the *Zamindars* like the Mughal officials shifted their loyalties to the Afghans, the Sikhs defended their country and they regarded both Afghans and Mughal emperors oppressors of Sikh people. This resulted in the establishment of Sikh *Misls* control over the Punjab in the wake of the Afghans decimated Muslim *Zamindars* fortunes.

During Sikh *Misl* dominance in the second half of eighteenth century, local chiefs went to the villages to collect protection tax. The political situation was very fluid, and boundaries often changed, so that no stable superior proprietorship could be created. It is to be noted that the Mughal revenue system continued during the *Misl* period as well as Ranjit Singh regime.<sup>32</sup> However, the largest portion of landed property in the Sikh dominion was held by small proprietors who cultivated their own land. Tenants under different titles with or without rights of occupancy, with or without obligations to pay rent were next in

28. Kessinger, Tom, *Vilayatpur 1848-1968*, California, 1974, p. 29.

29. For more details see *Vilayatpur* of Tom Kessinger.

30. Nijjar, B.S. *op. cit.*, p. 241.

31. Trevaskis, H.K., *op. cit.*, for further details.

32. Banga, Indu, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-92.



importance to the self cultivating proprietors. Their number was nearly half the number of proprietors.<sup>33</sup> Undoubtedly, the prevalence of small land holding and self cultivating land proprietor in the Punjab is a unique form of land tenure which affected agricultural development of the region to a great extent.

Let us have a detailed account of land tenures particularly of the *Misl* period. In the land administration, four main land tenures existed.<sup>34</sup> Mostly the chiefs granted their subordinate sardars a share from the land acquired. The Chief reserved for himself sufficient portion and from the rest minor sardars were given their due. The subordinate Sardars gave from their shares to the inferior leaders like the portions of the land according to their contribution. Those shares were further divided among the troopers.

The most notable course was that the *Misldari* according to which a grant of territory was made even to a petty chief who had joined the *Misl* without any condition of dependence. If the *Misldar* was dissatisfied with the Sikh Chief, he could transfer himself along with his lands to some other chief. And, each of the shares given by the *Sardars* to the subordinate chiefs upto the individual horseman was called *Patti* and the system was called *Pattidari*.<sup>35</sup> The co-sharer could not dispose of his tenure to a stranger but in an emergency he was allowed to mortgage it. At the time of his death he could give his *patti* to any of his male relations. Thus the *patti* became hereditary. The only condition of his tenure in relation to the *Sardar* of the *Misl* was the military help when needed.

The *Jagirdars* tenure was given to the relations and the deserving fellows of the Chief and in return for this grant the grantees were required to render personal service whenever the Chief needed it and they had to supply a certain number of equipped horses. The *Jagirs* could be resumed by the donor for the *Jagirdars* failure to render the necessary service. The tenure of *tabedari* was granted to a person who was fully subservient to the Chief. The land could be taken back for an act of disobedience or rebellion on the part of allottee. Besides, at some places like Jhang there existed *Hathrakhaidari* tenure. This was the land which one handed over to another one on the condition of paying one's land revenue. The holder of this land paid the land revenue

33. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

34. Chhabra, G.S., *The Advanced History of the Punjab*, Jullundur; 1960, p. 579.

35. For more details see Banga, Indu *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1978. pp. 88-92

which the first owner of the land owned, and kept rest of the produce from this land as his fee. The first owner was thus freed from the land revenue obligations.

Some times a person could acquire some new land by breaking up some waste land in the neighbourhood of a village, of which sufficient was available. In this case, however, the holder of the land could have no say in the management of the village. The integrity of the land was maintained by the rules such as the one which forbade a person to sell his share of his ancestral land to an outsider. And in case a man was unable to cultivate the whole of his land, he paid his revenue only on the land he cultivated. The rest of the land was cultivated by the community.

No doubt, land revenue, formed the principal source for the economic prosperity of the province. The peasant was alienator of his surplus produce in the form of land revenue which was exacted on behalf of the state.<sup>36</sup> The rulers wanted to keep the land revenue policy on sound footing as they derived the largest income from this source. The system was concerned with two men—the ruler and the subject. The latter, in return for the possession of land, was required to pay a share of his gross produce to the ruler in exchange for the protection which he sought from him. The ruler or his officers collected the land revenue direct from the actual cultivators without the intervention of the middleman. But in some cases *Zamindars* were merely responsible for the payment of fixed revenue. They in turn, squeezed as much as they could out of the peasantry.<sup>38</sup> To fix the land revenue for a particular area was not only easy job. For this many things had to be taken into consideration such as fertility of the soil, area of the land cultivated, nature of the crop grown, Government expenditure on improvement of agriculture and the requirements of the state,<sup>39</sup> etc.

The system of land revenue was similar to the one as was in practice during the Mughal period. At places the whole land was given as *Jagir* to the *Jagirdars*, who deposited a fixed amount of money into central treasury and after that they collected the amount, whatever they could extort from the peasants.<sup>40</sup> The method of assessment did

36. *Ain-i-Akbari* (Bloch), Vol. I, pp. 151, 294.

37. *Ibid.*; Moreland, *India at the Death of Akbar*, London, 1922, p. 90.

38. Moreland, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126.

39. Pāndey, A. B., *Society and Government in Medieval India*, Allahabad, 1965, p. 137.

40. Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

not very much; in most of the cases the *batai* system was followed. Under the *batai* system the land revenue was shared on the threshing floor after the harvest was gathered.<sup>41</sup> This method had been borrowed from the Mughals and under it, from the good quality of land as much as 40% or even 50% of the total produce was taken. In the case of a poor soil, however, the rate could be reduced to 1/3rd or even to the 1/4th.<sup>42</sup> Under *Kankoot* system the Government share was reckoned out of a standing crop, the value of which was estimated in term of *kankoot* (appraisement of the value before harvest) the state share was collected in kind. This system was a distinct improvement over the *batai* method because it saved the Government of a lot of botheration that was involved in the *batai* system.

In some parts of the province the land revenue was assessed on the *bigha* basis. In the Sikh times the cultivators usually paid by what was called the *bigha* rate, the *kardar* or the appraiser of the crops would select a fair field and calculate the produce by the eye, and a deduction of 1/10th would be made for the village servants and half of the rest was taken as the Government share. The field would then be roughly measured by man's paces. They could do this with unusual accuracy. The produce per *bigha* of this field was thus calculated as an average *bigha*; the *kardar* would afterwards visit each field of each owner examine the standing crops and assess it as equal to so many average *bighas*... The number of *bighas* agreed upon as entered against each man and as soon as the price of grain for the harvest was fixed the value was calculated. The village moneylender had to advance the whole or a large portion of the amount to the *kardar*, who then helped him in collecting the corn from the tenants.<sup>43</sup>

Land revenue was some time assessed on plough basis. Under this system fixed money rates were levied upon land. It worked like *bigha* system but it was different from that in one sense that the unit of land taken for assessment purpose was rather bigger. The unit under plough system was to the extent of land which would be easily cultivated by an average team of bullocks, i. e. about 15 acres.

For certain crops no crop rate was prepared; revenue rates were directly formulated in term of cash. It was due to the fluctuations in

41. Chhabra, G. S, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

42. *District Gazetteer Sialkot*, p. 93.

43. *Jhelum District Gazetteer*, p. 136; *Ain-i-Akbari* (Bloch), Vol. I, p. 285.

they fields these crops with every harvest.<sup>44</sup> In the case of cash payment the village moneylenders paid and they were helped later on by the *kardars* in realising the dues from the cultivators. In case of an abundant harvest which resulted in the fall in the price special remissions had to be ordered from the treasury.<sup>45</sup> The same was done in cases of distress caused by the rise in prices resulting from famines and draughts. The revenue was collected by the revenue collector *amil-guzar* and it was collected on two occasions *Harhi* (summer crop) and *Sawani* (winter crop). The collectors were asked to collect the revenue of the harvested crop and not to delay it for another crop. *Amilguzar* was assisted by the village headman, *Potdars* and the *Patwaris* in revenue collection task.<sup>46</sup> In fact, the revenue system of the Mughals continued in the Punjab until the British made the revenue settlement.

(What emerges as significant now is the fact that there existed more than one system of land tenure and production in the Punjab. But, the divergent social formations to be found in this region were not segregated or isolated from each other; instead the land ownership in the Punjab was characterised by the co-existence of superior and inferior ownership.)

The prevalence of small land holdings and self-cultivating land proprietors in the Punjab was a unique form of land revenue in India. It affected agricultural development of the province to a great extent. Special historical conditions in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century provided the prerequisite of the growth of the British Government crystallized the changes in land tenure into ownership of self-cultivating peasants and the right of occupancy tenants. This form of land ownership persisted through out the second half of the 18th and 19th century and became the paramount of agricultural production in the modern Punjab.

44. Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India*, p. 13; Chhabra, G.S., *op. cit.*, p. 520.

45. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama* (Ber), Vol. III, pp. 463-567; Chhabra, G.S., p. 520.

46. *Farang-i-Kardani* (as quoted by Irfan Habib), see page 197 of his book : *Saran*, p. 311; *Ain-i-Akbari* (Bloch), Vol. I, p. 287.

## Neki Ram Sharma as a Freedom Fighter

M. M. JUNEJA\*

In the freedom struggle the national scene was occupied by a galaxy of leaders. Pandit Neki Ram Sharma emerged as one of these leaders playing a laudable role. He was born on 7 September 1887 at Kelanga village in Rohtak district of Haryana which was then one of the most backward regions of India. His father, Pandit Hari Prasad, was a *brahman* of Mishra sub caste. Neki Ram received his early education from his grand-father, Pandit Prithvi Raj, who was a scholar of Sanskrit. For higher education he joined the Victoria Pathshala, Sitapur (U. P.) and then the Queen's College, Kashi.<sup>1</sup> In 1907 he was married and was blessed with one son and four daughters.<sup>2</sup>

The trial and transportation of Bal Gangadhar Tilak was one of the major factors which gave a turning point to the future course of young Neki Ram. Tilak was arrested on 23 June 1908 on the charge of publishing seditious articles in his paper *Kesari*; and was sentenced, on 22 July 1908, to six years transportation and fined one thousand rupees. On hearing the sad news, Neki Ram felt shocked; observed one day fast to pay homage to the great leader; deeply inspired by the Tilak's example; and, henceforth, became a pronounced Tilakite.<sup>3</sup>

On 28 April 1916 the Home Rule League was founded by Tilak. By the beginning of 1917 the Home Rule League had substantially attracted the Extremists and the youths. In February 1917 Neki Ram reached Bombay where Tilak had already started the Home Rule League's propaganda. At Bombay Mahatma Gandhi organised a public meeting on 9 February 1917 in support of the Indians living in South Africa. Apart from Gandhi and Tilak, the meeting was also addressed by Neki Ram. While speaking from its forum, Neki Ram waxed so sentimental that Tilak, apart from others, was moved into tears.

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1. *Pt. Neki Ram Sharma Abhinandan Grantha* (Calcutta, 1953), pp. 13-17.

2. Interview with Neki Ram's son, Mohan Krishna Sharma.

3. *Abhinandan Grantha*, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-7.

Neki Ram joined here the Home Rule League, and began to work energetically for propagating its cause.<sup>4</sup> The Home Rule agitation reached its highest watermark in July-August 1917. On 24 November 1917 Tilak reached Delhi where he was accorded a grand reception by the people. As Tilak had been prohibited from making a public speech, it was Neki Ram who addressed the audience on Tilak's behalf<sup>5</sup> :

Gentlemen, Tilak *Maharaj* wishes to thank you all for your reception of him. He is prohibited from addressing you himself by a government order. He wishes you to understand that he will not stop his labour until the Swaraj is an established fact. You, who have drunk the water of the Ganges and the Yamuna, who have been born and nourished in this country, should not rest until the Swaraj is obtained. When the Swaraj is obtained, foreigners will bow before you. Disperse to your homes, carry in your minds what I have said and continue to strive for the Home Rule.

In March 1918 Neki Ram addressed a Home Rule meeting at Etawah (UP). It was presided over by the Raja of Pratapner, Hukam Tej Pratap Singh and attended by many including Jawahar Lal Nehru, an active Home Ruler. In his address Neki Ram vehemently condemned the Government and consequently the Raja had to tender a written apology to the local authorities.<sup>6</sup> At Etawah Neki Ram and Nehru came into personal contact for the first time, and the latter was highly impressed by the eloquent and moving speech of Neki Ram.

The fiery public speeches, frequently made by Neki Ram, produced a good deal of alarm for the authorities. In order to curb his activities, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Malcolm Hailey, under the Defence of India Rules, placed restriction on Neki Ram in early June 1918. Regarding Neki Ram volcanic personality, Mr. Hailey prohibited him from making public speeches till further orders.<sup>7</sup> But the dauntless Neki Ram addressed a meeting on 24 June 1918 at the Lakshmi Narayan Dharamshala, Delhi, for which he was subsequently prosecuted.

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4. *Mast Baadal* (a Hindi Weekly published from Bhiwani), 21 September 1973.
  5. Record of the Chief Commissioner of Delhi (Home), File No. 47, 1 December 1917.
  6. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. I, pp. 110-11.
  7. Delhi Fortnightly Reports, 2nd half of June 1918.

Immediately after the said meeting, Neki Ram proceeded from Delhi to Poona to meet Tilak. He wanted to take Tilak to North India for securing maximum involvement of the people of this region in the Home Rule movement. But on his arrival at Poona, Neki Ram was informed by Tilak that his warrant of arrest had been issued by a court of Delhi. Tilak suggested Neki Ram to get himself arrested at Poona, but the latter turned down the suggestion saying, "My arrest at Poona may cause a police raid on your house which I don't want."<sup>8</sup> So, Neki Ram returned to Delhi, and was arrested (in the beginning of July 1918) alongwith Asaf Ali, another prominent Home Rule Leaguer of Delhi. Attacking the undemocratic attitude of the Government, Mrs. Annie Besant, the President of the All-India Home Rule League, stated<sup>9</sup> :

In Delhi Messrs Neki Ram and Asaf Ali are the objects of attack. Delhi, like the Punjab, is chafed under the reign of terror. Sir Michal O' Dwyer and Commissioner Malcolm Hailey are fit yoke-fellows. Their names would go down in history with the enemies of India. They eat the salt of India, they trample her right underfoot.

To help the under-trial-Neki Ram, Tilak sent D. D. Davar, Bar-at-Law and a leading Bombay-based lawyer, to Delhi to plead his case. However, Neki Ram was acquitted in August 1918 by Justice Spence, the Additional District Magistrate. While delivering his judgement, the magistrate ruled that meeting, held on 24 June 1918 at the Lakshmi Narayan Dharamshala (Delhi) and addressed by Neki Ram, was limited only to the members of the Home Rule League, and as such it could not be characterised as a public meeting.<sup>10</sup> But the executive authorities were determined to get Neki Ram imprisoned and they were, therefore, unhappy with the judgement. The authorities now decided to harass the judge, who had delivered the judgement in favour of Neki Ram. Consequently, the judge, Mr. Spence, was not only demoted as the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, but was also transferred to a remote area of Kaithal in Haryana.<sup>11</sup> Although, Neki Ram had been acquitted in August 1918, yet the Chief Commissioner of Delhi, Mr. Hailey, did not withdraw his prohibiting orders, imposed on Neki Ram from making public speeches, till August 1919.<sup>12</sup>

8. *Abhinandan Grantha*, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

9. *The Commonweal*, 21 June and 19 July 1918.

10. Home Political File No. 41, September 1918.

11. Sudhir Dhar, *Asaf Ali : Patriot and Humanist* (Delhi, 1984), p. 22.

12. Home Political File No. 426-40, October 1919.

Neki Ram's place among the Home Rulers may be gauged from the fact that he was looked upon as one of the most dangerous Home Rulers by the British authorities. They realised if such a popular, leader of great capacity was won over, he could render invaluable services to the British by promoting war-efforts. So the Deputy Commissioner of Rohtak called Neki Ram in 1918, and asked for his active support in getting the recruits for the Army. While turning down the proposal, Neki Ram bluntly remarked, "You seek my support to promote the cause of your Army. Perhaps, you are not aware of the fact that my effort, instead, is to take the whole Army with me." The Deputy Commissioner further questioned, "Panditji, how much property do you possess?" "A little one," came the reply. The Deputy Commissioner, thereupon, said, "I can arrange for you twenty-five *murabbas* of fertile land, provided you agree to support the government." Sharply reacting to the words, Neki Ram stated<sup>13</sup>:

You want to purchase me, it means, by giving simply a small piece of land of only twenty-five *murabbas*. But, you must know that the whole land of this country does belong to me. And I am sure that the day is not far away when you the British, who have occupied it by force, would be dislodged from the soil of India.

Neki Ram thus could neither be cowed by any force nor could be won over by any temptation. He is verily one of the top ranking Home Rule Leaguers. He obviously, occupies a place only next to those of Tilak and Annie Besant.

The Non-co-operation movement was started on 1 August 1920 and Neki Ram came forward supporting it whole-heartedly. He felt that to secure that maximum support from the people of his region, it was necessary that they must be touched by the magical presence of Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders. So, he approached Gandhi who, accompanied by Maulana Mohamad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Swami Satyadev and Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi, reached Bhiwani on 22 October 1920 to address the Ambala Divisional Conference.<sup>14</sup> More than 60,000 people from neighbouring districts of Haryana and Rajasthan could be seen swarming at Bhiwani

13. *Abhinandan Grantha*, p. 32.

14. Home Political File No. 76 (D), December 1920.



to have the *darshana* of the Mahatma. It was verily the proudest day in the history of Haryana in general and Bhiwani in particular. Because of Neki Ram's zealous participation in the Non-co-operation movement, Bhiwani was once again visited by Gandhi and other leaders including Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Lala Pyare Lal on 15 February 1921 to address the Haryana Rural Conference. The arrangements made at Bhiwani Conference by its organizers, led by Neki Ram, were highly appreciated by Gandhi. What impressed him most was the conspicuous absence of any chair. He considered this an exemplary arrangement, and expressed his desire that in future this example should be followed<sup>15</sup> :

Let Bhiwani present a lesson to the approaching Congress. The Reception Committee will save a few thousand repees and much space if they will dispense with chairs whether on the platform or below. It is cruel to impose chairs on the many, because the few seem to want them.

Further more, the Bhiwani conference were organised by Neki Ram and his associates so impressively in the *Swadeshi* style that Gandhi regarded the arrangements as model for the forthcoming session of the Congress to be held at Ahmedabad in December 1921. The most noteworthy feature of the Ahmedabad Congress was the absence of chairs and benches for delegates which had cost the Nagpur Congress, held in December 1920, seventy thousand rupees.<sup>16</sup> Apart from it, the Ahmedabad Congress, as desired by Gandhi, followed the *Swadeshi* pattern established by the Bhiwani conferences. Since 1921 the use of chairs in the Congress sessions thus became a thing of the past. Indeed, it was Neki Ram, the chief organiser of the Bhiwani conference, who gave this brilliant idea to the Congress, however, through Gandhi.

On the eve of the Prince of Wales visit to Bombay in November 1921, Neki Ram was prominently associated with the programme of hartal, launched by the Congress to foil the preparations for the reception of the royal guest. To make the move effective, Gandhi invited Neki Ram to Bombay. A week before the arrival of the Prince, Neki Ram and Sarojini Naidu addressed several public gatherings daily in the

15. *Young India*, 27 October 1920.

16. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress, 1885-1935*, Vol. I (Reprint, Delhi, 1969), p. 223.

city which aimed at training the people for the impending boycott. The Prince landed at Bombay on 17 November 1921 and the royal procession was cheered by a crowd of Europeans, Eurasians, Parsis and the affluent section of Bombay. Unfortunately, the swelling mob turned violent and started burning tram-cars, motor-cars, liquor-shops and the Parsi temples. Neki Ram helped the victims of the fray even at the risk of his life. He is reported to have escaped twice the police gun-point.<sup>17</sup>

At Bombay Neki Ram came to know about his warrant of arrest, and left for Bhiwani after getting Gandhi's permission. On his arrival at Bhiwani he was arrested and taken to Lahore for prosecution in the court of Justice Muir Hussain. On 28 November 1921, when the Judgement was to be passed on him, the court-room was packed with his sympathisers including Lala Lajpat Rai, Chaudhary Rambhaji Datt, Lala Duni Chand of Lahore and Pandit K. Santanam. Neki Ram was sentenced to eight months' rigorous imprisonment.<sup>18</sup>

When Neki Ram was arrested at Bhiwani he was hand-cuffed on both hands. Throughout his journey from Bhiwani to Lahore he remained hand-cuffed. He took his meal in the court with hand-cuffs on both hands. During his prosecution he was locked up in a cell of the Central Jail, Lahore, performing certain difficult and manual jobs. Lala Lajpat Rai questioned the ill-treatment meted out to Neki Ram:<sup>19</sup>

May we ask if the treatment meted out to Pandit Neki Ram, as an under-trial-prisoner, from the moment of his arrest onwards can show anything, but racial indiscrimination as against the sons of soil? Would a European of the position of Pandit Neki Ram have been treated similarly? The Indian member in charge of jails may well be asked if in his opinion Pandit Neki Ram is not as good as an European and entitled to the same treatment in jail as the latter.

Gandhi was also in touch with Neki Ram's prosecution and conviction. On the eve of his conviction, Gandhi paid his tributes to Neki Ram, saying:<sup>20</sup>

17. *Abhinandan Grantha*, pp. 48-49.

18. *The Tribune*, 29 November 1921.

19. *Ibid.*, 30 November 1921.

20. *Navjivan*, 11 December 1921.

Let us not mind if ... Pandit Neki Ram is absent from the Congress; what does it matter if he or other fighters like him are not present? Though he may not be physically present, his soul will be with us, will watch the strength we display and judge us. He will see whether or not we are worthy of his sacrifices. He knows that to be wounded is to prove one's courage, and to prove courage is to win.

Neki Ram had been the Propaganda-Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha and had presided over the second session of the Burma Provincial Hindu Sabha, held at Mandalay on 21-23 January 1928. He was shocked to know that some of the members of the Executive Committee of the Sabha had joined hands with the government in welcoming the Simon Commission, and resigned from the Sabha in the beginning of 1929.<sup>21</sup>

Gandhi launched the Salt-Satyagraha on 6 April 1930. Neki Ram did his best to intensify the *Satyagraha*. He addressed several public meetings exhorting the people to support the *Satyagraha*. Under his leadership, the people of Bhiwani manufactured contraband salt; the consumers boycotted foreign cloth; the commission agents vowed not to sell foreign cloth to their consumers; the people adopted *swadeshi*; thousands of spinning wheels started working for the production of *khaddar*; and several liquor-shops were picketed. Because of his leading participation in the Salt Satyagraha, Neki Ram was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined two hundred rupees for breach of the Salt Act.<sup>22</sup>

After the Gandhi-Irwin Pact Neki Ram was released on 12 March 1931 from the Central Jail, Hisar. He was taken round the town in a grand procession; and a public meeting was held in his honour.<sup>23</sup> Neki Ram now resumed his national activities. He addressed numerous rural meetings. Under his supervision the Congress volunteers picketed certain foreign-cloth-shops. Under the Picketing Ordinance, Neki Ram was arrested on 19 January 1932. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and was sent to the Multan Jail.<sup>24</sup> But, he was released

21. AICC File No. P-17 (Part III), 1938-40, also *Abhinandan Grantha*, p. 60.

22. *The Tribune*, 1 May, 31 July and 2 November 1930.

23. *Ibid.*, 20 March 1931.

24. *Abhinandan Grantha*, p. 88.

on 30 April 1932, and re-arrested on 29 May 1932. Now, he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and was again sent to the Multan Jail.<sup>25</sup> It was during this term of imprisonment when the marriage ceremony of his only son, Mohan Krishan Sharma, was performed on 29 January 1933.<sup>26</sup> In spite of the official insistence, Neki Ram, being a patriotic father, did not even apply for the parole, and the marriage thus took place as scheduled.

Gandhi started the Individual Satyagraha on 17 October 1940. Neki Ram, a chosen *Satyagrahi* for Bhiwani, appeared on the fore-front in this *Satyagraha*, and was arrested on 5 December 1940. He was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment.<sup>27</sup>

Being a member of the All-India Congress Committee, Neki Ram reached Bombay on 7 August 1942 to attend its meeting where the historic decision of the Quit India Movement was to be taken. During the movement serious disturbances broke out all over India. By the end of 1942, over 60,000 men and women were arrested. Neki Ram was arrested at Bhiwani under the Defence of India Rules. He was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment on 15 August 1942.<sup>28</sup> In April 1943, when Neki Ram was in the Central Jail, Ambala, he seriously fell ill, and became the permanent victim of paralysis. It was also during this term of imprisonment when the marriage of one of his daughters, Som Kala, took place. What came a stunning blow to Neki Ram during this imprisonment was the sad demise of his another daughter, Durga Devi.<sup>29</sup> The unfortunate father thus could attend neither the marriage of his one daughter nor could he join the funeral of his another daughter.

Neki Ram also devoted himself to the cause of supporting the Indian National Army which had crippled after the disappearance of Subhash Chandra Bose. In 1945 Neki Ram toured several places of Haryana, along with Jawaharlal Nehru, and collected a sufficient amount of money for the welfare of the INA.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately the cherished goal of independence was achieved on 15 August 1947, but Neki Ram's work did not end up there. He also served the cause of the poor displaced persons. His health had considerably deteriorated as a

25. *The Tribune*, 11 and 29 May 1932.

26. Interview, *op. cit.*

27. Home Political File No 18, December 1940.

28. *Abhinandan Grantha*, p. 95.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 95-96.

30. Interview, *op. cit.*

result of his continuous efforts and exertions. He was not destined to live long, and breathed his last on the mid-night of 7-8 June 1956 at 1.00 a.m.<sup>31</sup>

Through his pen and tongue Neki Ram brought about political awakening among the people of Haryana. There was hardly any movement or agitation, connected with the freedom struggle, in which he did not make his mark as being first and foremost in the whole of Haryana. His leadership galvanised the masses, especially the rural and weaker sections of society, into fresh life and activities. He was an indefatigable patriot whose persistent participation in the freedom struggle frequently incurred the wrath of the British authorities. He was sent to jail nine times, and remained behind the bars for nearly 2,200 days—of these he had undergone rigorous imprisonment for about 250 days, grinding grains and performing other difficult jobs. He was in jail when the marriages of his only son and that of a daughter took place, and one of his daughters died. He had gone to jail for the first time as a strong healthy youngman, but had come out of the jail for the last time as a physically shattered individual. It was mainly due to him that Bhiwani and Rohtak, hitherto obscure towns, appeared on the map of national politics only next in importance to Lahore and Amritsar in the Punjab.

During the period of 1922 to 1928 Neki Ram diverged from the mainstream while actively joining the Hindu Mahasabha. He, no doubt, disassociated himself from the communal organisation when he had realised that he was on the wrong track. But his image as a national leader was damaged beyond redemption. One can, of course, blame him for this derailment, but, keeping it aside, the fact cannot be denied that Neki Ram's sufferings and sacrifices in the cause of freedom struggle evoke our admiration and regards. Thus, judged by any standard, Neki Ram is one of the outstanding crusaders for the emancipation of his nation from the foreign yoke, and the most popular freedom fighter in his region. He is rightly known as the *Haryana Kesarī*, and would, indeed, go down in the history of India's struggle for freedom as the Tilak of Haryana.

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31. *Apna Desh* (a Hindi Weekly published from Bhiwani), 10 June 1956.

## Colonization of Punjab Lands Bill of 1907 Agitation : Role of Moderate and Extremist wings of Provincial Congress

SUNIL JAIN\*

The Punjab Government began the impressive Chenab Canal Colony in 1887. The diversion of the Chenab river into a system of perennial canals rapidly turned the barren wasteland of the Central Punjab into fertile farmland. The British had committed themselves to this large capital expenditure of over Rs. 30,000,000 for atleast three reasons. First, the Government expected that the additional land revenue from the once desolate desert land would swell the state budget. At the same time colonization of the canal land would relieve the acute population pressure in the central districts bordering the colony. Finally the colony was to be a social and economic experiment, a model farm for the rest of the Punjab. Healthy agricultural communities 'of the best Punjab type' would be established and kept under constant supervision. These in turn would demonstrate to other Punjabis how proper sanitation, careful economic planning and co-operation with the government could result in higher standard of living.<sup>1</sup>

For several years the colony remained an idyllic example of 'good administration,' a project to which Punjab officers proudly pointed as an indication of the beneficial and humanitarian effects of British rule. The first colonists did not resent the paternal attitude of the Colonization officer—in their eyes he was an economic saviour, their *ma-bap* (parent) who loved them and gave protection against all evils.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, trouble subsequently began to appear in the colony which threatened the tranquil and prosperous atmosphere of the Punjab. First, the Irrigation Department ran out of good land and distributed plots not readily accessible to canal branches. From 1902 onwards officials were faced with irate colonists in possession of inferior land.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Popham Young minute, 15/11/1895, Govt. of India, Revenue File, December 1896, 22-47A; N. G. Barrier, 'The Punjab Disturbances of 1907' in *The Panjab Past and Present* (Patiala, Oct. 1974), Vol VIII-II, p. 447.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 449.
3. *Ibid.*

Moreover, landholdings tended to become fragmented. When the original colonists died, the occupancy right of their land was subdivided among sons. The British became worried at a process which if not stopped might eventually leave the colonists with only a few acres. A purely peasant colony with holdings getting smaller in each generation would not...be a good thing ... The people might be prosperous up to a certain point, but their lives would be narrow and sordid, and government would look in vain to them for any active support in time of adversity.<sup>4</sup> Finally the canal officer was finding it increasingly difficult to enforce discipline. Many colonists evaded the residence requirements, illegally cut trees, built houses in the farming plots and led (by British standards) unsanitary lives.<sup>5</sup>

After unsuccessfully attempting to frighten the colonists by confiscating the grants of perennial offenders, the colonization staff developed an informal system of fines which they charged in lieu of confiscation. The fine system went uncontested until 1903, but when a recording of occupancy rights generated a sharp rise in penalties, several yeomen who were lawyers or relatives of lawyers took the matter to the civil courts. To the astonishment of the Punjab Government, several legal decisions went against the canal officer. The 1893 Punjab Colonization of land Act made conditions binding on the tenant and the Government, but it apparently did not rule out an appeal to the courts.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, to amend the 1893 Act the Canal colonies bill was introduced in the legislative council on 25 October 1906 and was passed in February 1907. The bill was contrary to the then accepted notions of peasant proprietorship. It restricted the rights of the Colonizers to make wills and denied them the right to cut trees on their land. At the same time, the Colonization Bill was introduced in order to enhance the rate of water supplied from the Bari Doab canals. The civil courts were explicitly debarred from hearing the complaints of the colonists, and the interpretation of the Colonization Officer only was to be accepted. This placed the helpless colonists entirely at the mercy of the Colonization Officer regardless of their natural rights and interests. The colonists

4. Douie letter, *Reports for the Chenab, Jhelum, Churian Sohaq Para Canals*, 1903, Lahore, 1904), pp. 8-9; See also N.G. Barrier, *op. cit.*, pp. 449-50.

5. B.H. Dobson, *Report on the Chenab Colony Settlement* (Lahore, 1915), pp. 9, 13, -14.

6. C.L. Tupper minute, 1/3/1901, Financial Commissioner File 441/108 A, [NAI]. See also N. G. Barrier, *op. cit.*, p. 450.

#### COLONIZATION OF PUNJAB LANDS BILL OF 1907 AGITATION

were also forbidden to transfer the property at will, and strict primogeniture was to be adhered to in the future.

The Colonization Bill sought to change the very basis of land relationship in the Punjab and attempted to deprive the farmer who had been uprooted from the districts of the Central Punjab to develop canal colonies of waste lands of the Crown in the Western Punjab. After their efforts had borne fruit and the area became one of the most fertile regions in India, Government of the Punjab tried to modify the tenure system on the plea of introducing uniformity.<sup>7</sup>

This was regarded as a direct interference with their personal affairs by the Government and it stirred up the country-wide agitation. It also added to the dissatisfaction of the colonists against the mal-administration of the colonization department and the corruption rampant therein. They not only resented the limitations placed by the Government on the transfer or inheritance of their lands after their deaths, insistence upon permanent residence in the colonies, compulsory planting of trees, etc., but also the vexatious system of fines imposed on them for frivolous reasons such as cleanliness, temporary absence, etc.<sup>8</sup> According to a new settlement in Rawalpindi based on higher rate of assessment, the rate on water taken from the Bari Doab was increased which further agitated the peasants.<sup>9</sup>

The *Panjabee*, an organ of the extremist Congressmen representing the view-point of the peasantry in the Punjab, gave the following comments on the Bill :<sup>10</sup>

It is a most pernicious attempt legislating for classes and thereby creating bad blood between them and others whom it affects injuriously. It is most uncalled for piece of wedding with rights legitimately acquired. Further it is a dishonest attempt to injure a class which have done the most in popularising British rule in India, and which probably contributes the largest amount of revenue which goes to maintain the vast number of Anglo-Indian bureaucrats that received royal salaries and pension from the Indian Exchequer.

7. Syed Razi Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1905-1910* (Oxford, 1964), p. 64 ; Satya M. Rai, *Punjabi Heroic Tradition, 1900-1947* (Patiala, 1978), p. 9.

8. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh* (Patiala, 1978), p. vi.

9. Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

10. *The Panjabee*, Lahore, 26 January 1907.



*The Observer* described the Bill as 'a grave error' and expressed the apprehension that it would seriously shake public confidence in the sagacity of the Government.<sup>11</sup>

*The Zamindar* (Karambad) viewed the day, 28 February 1907 when the land Bill was passed in the Punjab Legislative Council, as sorrowful as the 10th day of Muharram.<sup>12</sup>

By this time the Indian National Congress in Punjab had become a formidable organization. The Colonization Bill provided an opportunity to Punjab Congress leaders to organise protest meetings against the British imperialists. The Congress leaders made short tours to the canal colonies to preach the message of national unity and to propagate about anti-people designs of the British.<sup>13</sup> Indian Association, the field organization of the Punjab Congress, formed branches to organize agitations on a systematic basis.<sup>14</sup> District associations were formed and meetings and demonstrations were held in Delhi, Lahore, Lyallpur and Rawalpindi.<sup>15</sup> The students of Khalsa College, Amritsar, staged a hostile demonstration at the farewell visit of the outgoing Lieutenant Governor, Sir Charles Rivaz.<sup>16</sup>

The canal colony became the centre of the agitation where peasants in overwhelming numbers responded to the call of Congress leaders and it virtually became a peasant movement under the leadership of Congress stalwarts.

In Punjab, different Congress leaders condemned the Canal Colonies Bill. Fazl-i-Hussain, an eminent moderate Congress leader, denounced it as a grave blunder.<sup>17</sup> Duni Chand, the grand old man of the Punjab Congress who shaped the political movement in the province in its infancy, also criticised the Bill. He took an active part in the Colonization Bill agitation of 1907.<sup>18</sup> Sufi Amba Prasad led the agita-

11. *The Observer*, 9 March 1907.

12. *The Zamindar*, 8 March 1907.

13. N.G. Barrier, 'Mass Politics and the Punjab Congress in the pre-Gandhian Era,' in *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. IX-II (Patiala, 1975), pp. 355-57. Urban Punjabis rallying under the Congress banner led the agitation.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 355.

15. Raj Kumar Sharma, 'The Unrest of 1907 in the Punjab,' in *Proceedings Punjab History Conference* (Patiala, 1970), pp. 310-11.

16. Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

17. V.N. Datta, *Ideology of Political Elite in the Punjab* (Patiala, 1977), p. 25.

18. Abdul Majid Khan, 'Duni Chand of Lahore,' *The Tribune*, Lahor, 26 March 1907.

tion in Punjab and made efforts to pose a serious challenge to the Government.<sup>19</sup> Rambhaji Datta and Dharam Das Suri (Congress leaders) also vehemently exposed the flaws in the new legislation.<sup>20</sup> The Secretary, Amolak Ram, Rawalpindi District Congress Association protested to the Secretary to the Governor of Legislative Council Punjab against the measure.<sup>21</sup> He stated frankly, "if the object of the Government is not to allow any Hindu to own land, the best course will be to avow it openly instead of trying to obtain by doubtful indirect means."<sup>22</sup> The Government objected as the Association did not present a 'humble memorial but remarks and observations'.<sup>23</sup>

There is no denying the fact that it was the Rawalpindi District Indian Association which was found to be more active in political activity against the Government by not letting the grass grow under their feet. Under the auspicious of this Association, meetings were held in Ganj Mandi in Rawalpindi on 7 and 21 April 1907 against this imperialistic measure of the Government. The active participants of this association were Lala Hans Raj Sawhney, Lala Amolak Ram, Lala Gurdas Ram, Pandit Janki Nath, Malik Khazan and Ajit Singh.<sup>24</sup>

A mass meeting of the representatives of peasants and those of Indian Association Lahore, a branch of the Indian National Congress, was held at Lyallpur to protest against the Bill.<sup>25</sup> As reported in the *Panjabee*, it began with the following stirring poem read by Prabh Dayal:

*Pagri sambhal O Jatta, Pagri Sambhal O*

Pandit Rambhaji Datta, Pleader of Lahore, emphasized the importance of Hindu-Muhammedan unity for their common cause.

The enthusiasm of those present was so great that before any one could be elected to preside over the meeting, Sardar Teja Singh, Rais, Chak No. 66, Jhang Branch, stood up to make a *benti* (appeal) to the Government and the people. He said :<sup>26</sup>

19. Home Department Political, A, Nos. 108-18, May 1910 (Confidential) and Progress Report November 1909 (N.A.I.).

20. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 5 February 1907.

21. *Ibid.*, 7 February 1907.

22. *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 22 Feb. 1907, p. 2 (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, hereafter cited as NMML).

23. *Ibid.*

24. Home Deptt, Political-A, January 1908, File No. 64-72, p. 17 (N.A.I.).

25. N.G. Barrier, 'The Punjab Disturbances of 1907', *op. cit.*, p. 457.

26. *The Panjabee*, 27 March 1907.

Our love for the British Government dates from a very long time. We have fought for the British in Kabul and conquered it thrice for them. We fought for the English against our own countrymen at the time of the mutiny. We have ever remained faithful and loyal. We even lost our own country. We are still loyal and faithful but the British Government is becoming faithless. They want to inflict all sorts of humiliations on us. We should point out these things to them clearly and boldly. Go to England and point out the real facts to the Britishers and the King-Emperor.

M. Ghulam Qadir said that the Bill in question had been passed in spite of people's protests and they could only be satisfied if the old law was continued and the new Bill was rejected—'*Purana qanun man-zur naya mansukh.*' Chaudhri Shahab-ud-Din said that a representation had been made to the Viceroy to withhold his assent to the Bill. Chaudhri Ilahi Baksh then made a short and stirring speech. He said : <sup>27</sup>

Our own countrymen are to be blamed more than anybody else. They prefer government titles and hanker after them. What title can be greater than that of serving one's own country.

Continuing his speech he remarked that he was in a distant place when he heard that his mother was ill (by mother he meant mother-country and the illness consisted in the passing of the new Act). He exhorted the audience to do everything possible speedily and surely.

The main attraction in the meeting was the speech of Lala Lajpat Rai which ran as follows :

Brothers ! Government says that they have given you these lands. My first question to the Government, on your behalf is, whence did the Government bring these lands. The lands are here along with the spacious sky over them from time immemorial, ever since creation. I ask when did this Government come ? How did it obtain these lands, and how did it give them to us ? The blood of our forefathers was shed on it. We conquered it and inhabited it. If Government claims it because we killed one another, that is another thing, otherwise these lands are either ours or God's.

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27. *Ibid.*

He further added :

The foreigners use one weapon against us. Our duty is to snatch that weapon from their hands and snap it into pieces. That weapon is of divide and rule. They would divide us by saying that we are Sikhs, Muhammedans and Hindus. We should try to break these weapons. We should discard and shun all such people who become spies to work against their own countrymen. Secondly, we should take a vow to be united. That is the only remedy for eradicating the root of the evil. Guard your country's honour, help your afflicted brethren. Don't fear the jails, nor even the death, and your object will be achieved.

Lala Lajpat Rai also impressed upon the necessity to given up going to British law courts, by saying, "They are a prison in your national growth ; better put up with insults at home rather than go to a law court."<sup>28</sup>

Ajit Singh was another prominent speaker in the meeting. He criticised the increase in land assessment and said that the peasants were the real rulers of the country; that the Rajas were the *Kaminas*; that the Deputy Commissioner, the Superintendent of Police and the Chief Officers and the Government were their servants.<sup>29</sup> He exhorted the peasants to stop cultivation until the amount was reduced, and remarked, "The Punjab also has shaken off sleep after Bengal."<sup>30</sup>

Ajit Singh founded the Bharat Mata Sabha in 1907 to carry on systematic agitation of the extremist Congress leaders.<sup>31</sup> Many young revolutionaries including extremist Congressmen like Sufi Amba Prasad, Zia-ul Haq, Lal Chand Falak, Din Dyal Banke, Sardar Kishan Singh, and S. Swaran Singh were its prominent members. Other members who made earnest efforts to spread the ideology and programme of the Sabha were Duni Chand of Lahore, Pindi Das, Dhanpat Rai, Mehta Anand Kishore, Jaswant Rai, Dina Nath of Kasur and Ram Singh. These members of the Bharat Mata Sabha were in touch with secret societies of Bengal like Dacca Anushilan Samiti, Jagantar Party, etc.<sup>32</sup>

28. *Ibid.*

29. Home Dept., Political (Deposit), July 1907, cited in Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

30. *Hindustan*, Lahore, 3 May 1907.

31. Home Department, Political (Deposit), July 1907, No. 8 (N.A.I.).

32. J.S. Dhanki, 'The Bharat Mata Sabha, 1907-09' in *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVIII-I (Patiala, 1984), p. 202.

On 29 March 1907 in a speech at Amritsar, Ajit Singh dwelt at length on the economic exploitation of India by the British imperialists. He called upon his countrymen to boycott foreign goods and encourage the indigenous industries.<sup>33</sup>

It is my fixed opinion that our difficulties will not be lessened until we have a Government of our own. We all know that our moral support is the main stay of the Indian Government. If it is withdrawn the whole superstructure will collapse. If we go on helping the Government we shall be traitors to our country and sinners against the national cause...

At Rawalpindi (in a Congress meeting) he spoke again in the same strain, but the President of the meeting, Lala Hans Raj (a moderate Congress leader) thinking that Ajit Singh by his severe criticism of the Government was inciting violence, tried to stop him. Feeling hurt, Ajit Singh left the meeting immediately.<sup>34</sup> At another meeting he is reported to have remarked that three million Indians could easily defeat the hundred and fifty thousand Englishmen in India.<sup>35</sup>

It was reported to the British Government that through their violent and stirring speeches Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai were becoming popular with the masses and their views regarding the non-payment of water taxes had penetrated into the hearts of the agricultural masses.<sup>36</sup>

Sir Denzil Ibbetson, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, considered Lajpat Rai as the "moving spirit of the whole movement and brain behind it."<sup>37</sup> He alleged that Lala Lajpat Rai was in correspondence with the Amir of Afghanistan and was trying to tamper with the loyalty of the army.<sup>38</sup> It was also alleged that Lalaji was to lead one lakh desperadoes to the Lahore fort on 10 May and Ajit Singh was to be the Captain of his soldiers.<sup>39</sup> The Government records show that a meeting was held on 6 April at Lajpat Rai's house to discuss the proposal of asking the villagers not to pay water taxes.<sup>40</sup> Two letters written

33. Ganda Singh (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 26.

34. Fauja Singh, *A Brief Account of the Freedom Movement in the Punjab* (Patiala, 1972), p. 15.

35. Fauja Singh (ed.), *Who's Who : Punjab Freedom Fighters*, Vol. I (Patiala, 1972), p. XIX.

36. Ganda Singh (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. viii.

37. Home Dept., Political (Public), 1 August 1907, No. 246 (N.A.I.).

38. Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

39. Vide *Hindustan*, Lahore, 17 May 1907.

40. Home Dept., Political (Public), 1 August 1907, No. 246 (N.A.I.).

by Lala Lajpat Rai to Bhai Parma Nand in London were also produced to confirm his hand in these activities.<sup>41</sup>

The British Government regarded Ajit Singh also as the most dangerous enemy of the Government. The Secretary of State for India reported to the House of Commons in June 1907 that 28 meetings were held in the Punjab between 1 March and 1 May of 1907; of these, only five were closely related to agricultural grievances, the remaining twenty-three were purely political in nature.<sup>42</sup>

These meetings of the extremist Congress Workers caused great anxiety to the Government. The Deputy Commissioner served notice on Ajit Singh for his seditious speeches along with Lala Gurdas Ram, Lala Hans Raj, Lala Amolak Ram, Pandit Janki Nath and Malik Khazan. They were asked to attend a public enquiry on 2 May 11.00 a. m. A large crowd gathered outside the court. Fearing the possibilities of trouble, the Deputy Commissioner postponed the hearing. The people who were excited started damaging the Government property and Deputy Commissioner's house. Thereupon all the political leaders connected with the agitation were arrested; and most of them belonged to the Arya Samaj which had strong leanings towards the Congress. Ibbetson also wrote in his minute that the active persons in the agitation belonged almost without exception to the Arya Samaj, a society framed primarily with a religious object, but which in the Punjab at least had always a strong political bent.<sup>43</sup>

The news of the arrest of Ajit Singh and others spread in the province like wild fire. A protest meeting was organised at the Bharat Mata Sabha office, Lahore. After the meeting people were prevented from going towards the Upper Mall by the police which apprehended dangers to the European quarters located there. The crowd which was shouting slogans like 'Bande Matram' refused to disperse. The police worked themselves to an unusual degree of frenzy and heat and began trample people under their horses without making the least discrimination.<sup>44</sup>

41. Home Dept. Political, Part B, January 1910, Nos. 25-26 (N.A.I.).

42. Home Dept. Political—Deposit, August 1908, Nos. 402-416: see also *The Tribune*, Lahore, 10 June 1907; *The Panjabee*, Lahore, 6 May 1907.

43. Home Dept. Political A, January 1908 (Confidential), Nos. 64-72; Punjab Government letter No. 14-S-B dated 3 January 1908; Private telegrams, 3 May 1907, 5 May 1907. Viceroy to Secretary of State, *Minto Papers* (N.A.I.).

44. *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, 8 May 1907, quoted from M.M. Ahluwalia, *Freedom Struggle in India, 1858-1909* (Delhi, 1965), p. 348.

There were other reasons which helped in increasing the tension. The Government feared that radicals were organising a second revolt on the 50th anniversary of the revolt of 1857 which fell on 10 May. A Government agent reported from Amritsar that a section of Sikh sepoys of the 26th Punjab Infantry were sympathetic to the seditions when riots broke out in Lahore and Rawalpindi, and that they were quite prepared for the mutiny.<sup>45</sup> Sir Ibbetson wrote in his minute.<sup>46</sup>

One striking and exceedingly dangerous feature which has been observed every where is that special attention has been paid to the Sikhs and in the case of Lyallpur to the military pensioners and that special efforts had been made to procure their attendance at meetings to enlist their sympathies and to inflame their passions.

An article, an exact copy of a leaflet addressed to the 'Men of the British army,' by the natives of India and Afghanistan who had migrated to America appeared in *India*, published from Gujranwala with Lala Pindi Das, an eminent Punjab Congress activist, as its editor. It described the conditions of the Indian sepoy who was paid Rs.9/-per month as compared to white soldier who was given Rs. 48/- in addition to three meals a day, excellent uniform and a gratuity of £ 30 or Rs. 450/- at retirement after three years' service. In fact, the British gave the Indian sepoy only a fraction of the money collected from the Indian people through taxes. The writer of the leaflet asked the Indian sepoy why he killed his countrymen or endangered his own life. Was it because he wanted to remain loyal to his master?<sup>47</sup>

The authorities got panicky at the increasing wave of discontent and arrested the Congress leader Pindi Das because the legal remembrance was of the opinion that the article was full of allegations, tending to inflame the minds of the native against the English as a whole. Lala Pindi Das, editor of *India* and Lala Dina Nath of *Hindustan* were

45. Weekly Report of the Director of Criminal Intelligence (Simla), September 1907.

46. Sir Denzil Ibbetson's minute, 30 April 1907, enclosure to letter, 3 May 1907, Punjab to India, Political-A Progs., August 1907, No. 148 (N.A.I.).

47. The article says : "Because you will answer, you are loyal to the salt of the English. But you do not understand from whence have the English brought the salt. Really they have got it from the taxes levied on you, of which not even 10,00,00th part is given to you blackmen of defective senses and notwithstanding all this injustice, you are sitting idle and are content with considering yourself salt eaters." Vide Political A Progs., July 1907, No. 3.5 (N.A.I.).

48. *Ibid.*

sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment. Hindustan steam press at which *India* was published was also confiscated.

This enraged the people. A crowd stopped the carriage and attacked the police party escorting Pindi Das, and garlanded the prisoner.<sup>49</sup> The Punjab Government in a letter to Government of India dated 18 June, described the political situation in the Punjab as exceedingly dangerous which urgently demanded a remedy.<sup>50</sup>

Ibbetson urged Lord Minto that if the loyalty of the Sikh Jats was ever materially shaken the British rule in India would become weak and unstable,<sup>51</sup> adding that 'Nai Hawa' was blowing through mens' mind. He attributed the new air to the publication and circulation of seditious literature which was pouring in Bengal and was finding its way into other provinces as well. Supporting the same view, Sir Reginold Craddock said that the "Canal Colonies Bill afforded only a pretext,"<sup>52</sup> the real reason being sympathy with the Bengal agitators.

It can't be denied that there was resentment against the highhanded policies of Lord Curzon; and Lajpat Rai, Sarla Devi and other Congress exponents gave expression to this feeling in their speeches which helped in instilling new ideas among the people. The speeches of Tilak and Aurobindo had influenced the young minds in the Punjab as well.<sup>53</sup> Sarla Devi who was having indirect contact with Tilak delivered seditious speeches in Lahore.<sup>54</sup>

But the chief factors responsible for the unrest were agrarian. The Punjab was in ferment in 1907 under the extremist Congress wing's leadership due to the wrong and highhanded economic policies of the colonial masters, unjust administrative and legislative measures of the Government, the Colonization Bill, increase in irrigation rates and land revenue; the imposition of illegal fines and the spread of the plague; all these factors contributed to discontent among the people of the province. It is significant to observe that the unrest in the Punjab, for

49. Home Dept. Political A, July 1907, Nos. 178-80.

50. Home Dept. Political A, 8 July 1910, Nos. 108-18; see also Sir Denzil Ibbetson's minute, 30 April 1907, enclosure to letter, 3 May 1907, Punjab to India, Political A Progs., August 1907, No. 148 (N.A.I.).

51. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, 1839-1964 (Princeton, 1966), p. 159.

52. Reginold Craddock, *The Dilemma in India* (London, 1929), p. 148.

53. *Sedition Committee Report* (Calcutta, 1918), p. 141.

54. Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement; 1857-1947* (Jullundur, 1968), p. 106.



the most part, was not the result of outside influence nor was it engendered by the extremists from outside.

Under the circumstances Ibbetson requested the Viceroy that the warrants for the confinement of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh be issued under Section 2 of Regulation of 1818. Consequently Lala Lajpat Rai was arrested and deported on 9 May and Ajit Singh on 3 June. The editor of the *Panjabee*, was also arrested as it was alleged that Lajpat was its proprietor.

It would be pertinent to know Lala Lajpat Rai's attitude towards the movement and his role in this regard which has aroused a great deal of controversy. To begin with, Lala Lajpat Rai supported the movement, addressed mass meetings and gave moral help to the organisers. He fully appreciated the sincerity and vigour with which Ajit Singh, Haider Raza and Sufi Amba Prasad carried on the agitation. In a letter published in the *Panjabee* before he was deported, he said that the voice of Ajit Singh and Haider Raza was the voice of the whole Punjab.<sup>55</sup> Certain differences, no doubt, arose between the extremist wing led by Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai particularly about the methods employed during the last days.

Lalaji argued that he did not create any type of seditious atmosphere in the Punjab. It is clear from his petition submitted on 29 June 1907 to the Viceroy and the Governor-General of India saying he was "not conscious of having done anything which was intended or calculated to cause commotion in any part of the dominion of His Majesty the king Emperor of India" and that he believed that "he has been and continues to be the victim of false and malicious information lodged against him by his enemies or reports made by misinformed or prejudiced officers. He begged that "he may be informed of the charge or charges against him so that he may submit his explanation."

In the absence of any satisfactory response from the Viceroy to his petition, Lala Lajpat Rai formally submitted on 29 September 1907 through the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, a memorial to the Secretary of State for India, reiterating therein that he had never done or attempted anything which caused or was likely to cause 'commotion' in any part of His Majesty's dominions in India. He complained that in his arrest and deportation he "was a victim of

55. Letter, 3 May 1907, Punjab to India, Political-A Progs., August 1907, No. 149 (N.A.I.).

56. B.B. Majumdar, *Indian Political Associations and Reports of Legislature 1818-1917* (Calcutta, 1965), p. 283.

false information” and that the action of the Government of India was “quite unjustified and uncalled for.” He further submitted that he had taken no part in the Lahore and Rawalpindi riots, nor had he directly or indirectly encouraged any person to bring about these riots, and that he “was always within the bounds of law and constitution in expressing his disapproval of certain Government measures and never advocated any violent or illegal methods of redress, nor did he associate with any people who, to his knowledge, advocated such measures.”<sup>57</sup>

However Lala Lajpat Rai’s statement that he was innocent and that he did not associate with persons who to his knowledge advocated violent measures, is not fully correct.

Commenting on this Manbehari Majumdar writes, “Lajpat Rai’s connection with the revolutionary movement was shrouded in mystery, though he was one of the earliest leaders to denounce the mendicant policy of the Congress.”<sup>58</sup>

The correspondence between Minto and Morley also shows that Ibbetson was mistaken about Lala Lajpat Rai as the most dangerous enemy. The real danger was from Ajit Singh, a fiery orator.<sup>59</sup>

But the deportation of extremist Congress leaders stirred an India-wide agitation and number of meetings were held to protest against the arbitrary and uncivilised action of the Government. An atmosphere of hatred and bitterness against the Government prevailed. This act of high-handedness of the Government in arresting their respected leader shook the faith of the educated classes in constitutional agitation.

G. K. Gokhale felt that the Government had done a ‘grievous wrong’ to him in depriving him of his liberty without a trial and deporting him out of the country. About his activities he said : “Again and again he (Lajpat Rai) and I have discussed our aims, hopes, our methods of work and there never has been any substantial difference of opinion between us. His language was at times a trifle strong—this must necessarily be a matter of temperament—but his aims and methods have always been strictly constitutional and I refuse to believe unless clear evidence to the contrary is forthcoming that he could ever have done

57. Home Dept. Political A, Proceedings, December 1907, Nos. 15-16 (N.A.I.).

58. Manbehari Majumdar, *Militant Nationalism in India* (Calcutta, 1966), p. 122.

59. Home Dept. Political, Weekly Report of the Director of Criminal Intelligence, 15 November 1907.

60. Gokhale’s letter to the editor, *Times of India*, 21 May 1907, *Gokhale Papers* (N.A.I.).

anything that could in any way constitute a justification for the action of the Government."<sup>60</sup>

On Lalaji's deportation the *Bande Matram* made the following cryptic comments :<sup>61</sup>

Hour for speeches and fine writing is passed. The bureaucracy has thrown down the gauntlet. We take it up. Men of the Punjab. Race of the lion. Show these men who would stand you into the dust that for one Lajpat Rai they have taken away, a hundred Lajpat Rais will rise in his place. Let them hear a hundred times louder your war cry—Jai Hindustan.

The *Jhang Sial*, a patriotic paper called the deportation of Lajpat Rai 'a piece of oppression, barbarism and cowardice.'<sup>62</sup>

*The Tribune* commented on the episode as follows : " The country does not approve of the adoption of methods which are to say the least unenglish and unworthy of a civilised government such as others."<sup>63</sup>

To the *Panjabee*, Lajpat Rai, like Captain Dreyfus, was a victim of an act of blind vengeance.<sup>64</sup>

After the departure of Ibbetson, the Government of India decided to change its policy from coercion to conciliation. Lord Minto realized that the colonization Bill was a faulty piece of legislation and that canal colony in the Punjab was an important recruiting field for the army. Such unrest among the people would be harmful to the colonial interests. As a result, he vetoed the Colonization Bill and also released the deportees. With this the tempo of the movement was subsided.<sup>65</sup>

The above mentioned account of the agrarian movement under the banner of Congress activists clearly shows that Ajit Singh and his young companions like Sufi Amba Prasad, Pindi Das, Duni Chand and others played a significant role in spearheading the peasant agitation and in arousing anti-British feelings among the farmers.

Lala Lajpat Rai utilised this agitation for expanding the area of the influence of the Congress. It was for this reason in 1907 that he

61. H.D. Mukerjee and Uma, *B.C. Pal and India's Struggle for Swaraj* (Calcutta, 1953), p. 84 ; see also Hiren Mukerjee, *India's Struggle for Freedom* (Calcutta, 1946), p. 117.

62. Confidential Report of the Native Newspapers of the Punjab, 1907 (vide the '*Jhang Sial*', 20.5.1907), p. 267.

63. *The Tribune*, 19 May 1907.

64. *The Panjabee*, 15 May 1907 and 22 May 1907.

65. Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

adopted a mid course between the moderates and the extremists so that the Congress movement may not suffer. Lalaji was criticised by the group of Ajit Singh for his apologetic statements to the British authorities. But it may be said in extenuation of Lalaji that he was a pragmatic politician and in larger interest of the freedom struggle he considered it expedient to adopt such an attitude. It will not be correct to question his patriotism or to mitigate the importance of the significant role played by him in the national movement.

However, the 1907 disturbance, dramatically altered the Punjab political situation and marked a turning point in the history of the Provincial Congress. For the change in the British policy from coercion to conciliation paved the way for the temporary ascendancy of the moderates in the Congress and led to the disintegration of the Punjab Congress. The Viceroy's veto on Bill strengthened the moderate case for British justice.<sup>66</sup>

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66. *The Panjabee*, Lahore, 14 September 1907; *The Tribune*, Lahore, 8 November 1907.

## Book Reviews

*Buried Alive : Autobiography, Speeches and Writings of an Indian Revolutionary Sardar Ajit Singh*, Pardaman Singh and J.S. Dhanki (edited), Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984, pp. XII+266, Rs. 120/-.

The volume under review is an autobiography of Sardar Ajit Singh whose contribution to the nationalist struggle is such that he has an exceptional claim on our attention. In the history of Indian freedom movement, Ajit Singh's name is generally mentioned along with more popular leader Lala Lajpat Rai in connection with their deportation to Mandalay. *Deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh*, edited by Dr Ganda Singh in 1978, being a compilation of the selections of official notes and correspondence about political agitation in Punjab, 1907, ultimately leading to the deportation of the leaders, proved very useful to the scholars working on the period. But the present volume is the first work to reflect the day-to-day activities of the great revolutionary not only in India but also abroad. Additionally, his speeches, some of which have been translated from a Urdu booklet entitled *Taqarir-Ajit* (procured from U.S.A.), his correspondence and reports of C.I.D. and other governmental officers in regard to his activities and propaganda should be of enormous use.

Born on 3rd. February 1881, he was uncle of Sardar Bhagat Singh, the doyen of revolutionaries. A student of D.A.V. College, Lahore, Ajit Singh imbibed by the simplicity, nationalist fervour and spirit of sacrifice of principal Hans Raj and Lala Lajpat Rai. Having read a number of books about Rajput and Sikh heroism and stories of Italian leaders, Mazzini and Garibaldi, he was powerfully influenced by their patriotic zeal, spirit of sacrifice and love of country.

Ajit Singh openly identified himself with the 'extremists' nationalist to the core, he declared, "Our difficulties will not be lessened until we have a Government of our own."

In 1907 Ajit Singh and his comrades formed 'Bharat Mata Sabha,' a secular and revolutionary organisation with its headquarters at Lahore. Its express idea was to spread political consciousness among the people so as to prepare them for the eventual revolutionary struggle.

With a view to bring about a revolution in Punjab, he organised a series of meetings at Lahore and other places. He advocated passive

resistance, importance of Swadeshi and boycott of British goods. Alarmed by these activities and the fiery speeches of Ajit Singh, the then Lt. Governor of Punjab, asked for deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. The two were deported to Mandalay.

After his release, Ajit Singh consistently strove for unity among all Indian people. He urged: "God is one, India is your country and every Indian is your brother, you are a Sikh afterwards, an Indian first, you are a Muslim afterwards, an Indian first, you are a Hindu afterwards, an Indian first, you are a Christian afterwards, an Indian first."

He also condemned caste, mutual discords and feelings of high and low in Indian society.

Fearing his arrest, Ajit Singh decided to flee from the country in 1909 and escaped to Persia where he developed close relationship with Iranian revolutionaries from Persia. He went to Turkey via Russia, where he met Mustafa Kamal Pasha and other 'Young Turk' leaders. From Turkey, he went to Paris and met Indian Revolutionaries—Shayam ji Krishan Verma, Madame Cama, etc. In Switzerland, he met Hardayal and other revolutionaries of the world. It was here he met Mussolini, the Italian leader and Trotsky the great Russian revolutionary. From 1914 to 1932, he stayed in Brazil, where he formed a society of Indians settled there to make them aware of their duty and responsibility towards their mother-country and also to raise funds to support India's struggle for freedom. From 1932 to 1938, he worked in France, Switzerland and Germany. He also met Subhash Chander Bose.

On the eve of Second World War, Ajit Singh shifted to Italy, where he formed 'Friends of India Society.' Ajit Singh also claims to have formed Azad Hind Fauj in which he recruited 10,000 Indian soldiers. His speeches from Rome Radio aroused great enthusiasm among Indians. He usually began his speeches with the well known couplet of Bahadur Shah, the last Mughal Emperor :

*"Gazion main boo rahegi jab talak Imman ki  
Tab talak London tak chelegi tegh Hindustan ki*

and ended with :

*Maza ayega jab apna raj dekhenge  
Ke apni he zamin hogi apnā asama hoga.  
Shahidon ki chitaon per lagenge her baras melay  
Watan per marne walon ka yahi baqi namo nishan hoga.*

In 1945, Ajit Singh was arrested by the allied forces and all the Indian prisoners of war were transferred to Germany.

Ajit Singh left Germany for India in December 1946. He reached India when India was going to be free but the unity of the country was being shattered. He got a rude shock when he saw intense communal frenzy and wide-spread bloodshed, and he breathed his last on 15 August 1947.

Whereas the story of Ajit Singh's life is a story of struggle carried on by Indians within India and without his speeches and letters edited in this volume reflect how he aroused the enthusiasm of the Indian people for the freedom of their motherland.

Well arranged, carefully edited, with a detailed and scholarly introduction and footnotes, the volume is sure to be a source of great information to scholars engaged in the study of Indian freedom struggle.

SHIV KUMAR GUPTA\*

*Babur : Founder of the Mughal Empire in India* by Mohibbul Hasan, pub. Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1985, pp. XII+235, Price Rs. 150.

There is no dearth of biographical studies on Babur, the initiator of a new era in the history of medieval India, known as the Mughal rule. It appears that Babur's adventures and mis-adventures in Central Asia, his brilliant military success in India and his fascinating personal character prompted a number of scholars—R. M. Caldecott (1844), William Erskine (1854), Stanley Lanepoole (1899), L. F. Rushbrook Williams (1918), Ferdinand Grenard (1921), S.M. Edwards (1926) and Radhey Shyam (1978)—to choose Babur as a subject of study. But in the eyes of Mohibbul Hasan, 'they are outdated, most of them having been written over fifty years ago.' What is more, they have concentrated more on his career in Central Asia than on his achievements during the last five years of his life, spent in Hindustan. Not only have they failed to take cognizance of the politico-cultural environment that shaped his character, they have not done justice to the administrative institutions evolved by him. Besides, they have not fully appreciated the nature of his fighting forces, including the role of

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artillery in his Indian wars. It is, obviously, these lacunae that motivated Mohibbul Hasan to work on a new biography of the first Mughal emperor, notwithstanding the present historiographical trend which seeks to explore the social, economic and cultural developments in the past. The book under review has grown out of Hasan's introduction to the Indian section of Bacque Grammont's French translation of *Babur Namah* (Livre de Babur) published in Paris in 1980.

The author begins by describing the topographical characteristics of Trans-oxiana which had offered itself for settlement to numerous hordes of Turkish tribes ever since the beginning of the sixth century—a development which produced far-reaching consequences not only in Central Asia but also in India, West Asia and even Europe. Depending mainly on Barthold's *Four Studies in the History of Central Asia*, the author has briefly highlighted the political fortunes of Babur's Turkish ancestors. In extracting Babur's own career through a quagmire of perpetual strife, he has confined himself only to the most essential developments, leaving out numerous cumbersome details. True to his declared intention (which has been emphasised in the title of the book), he has devoted only three chapters, out of a total of twelve, to Babur's political activities prior to his first expedition across the Indus.

It contains a succinct account of Babur's Indian invasions, which hold special significance for the history of Punjab. It was during the course of these military expeditions, which took place between A. D. 1519 and 1525, that Babur secured the submission of the various Afghan tribes inhabiting the trans-Indus tract, particularly the Yusufzais. In the like manner, he forced the powerful clan of the Gakkhars, who controlled vast areas in the Singh Sagar Doab, to submit. Moreover, he succeeded in eliminating a number of Afghan Officers posted in Punjab (including its governor, Daulat Khan Lodi) besides occupying such important stations as Bhera, Khushab, Chiniot, Sialkot, Kalanaur, Lahore, Dipalpur, Malot and Hissar Firoza. Not unlike Muhammad Ghori, Babur appears to have realized that a firm control over Punjab was essential in order to make bid for the occupation of the Gangetic plain.

Hasan has given a clear and lucid description of the military techniques put into practice by Babur in the battlefield of Panipat, the



proceedings of war against Ibrahim Lodi and the numerous difficulties encountered by the victor in the wake of his success. A similar treatment has been accorded to Babur's armed conflict with the Rajputs as well as the Afghans of the east who were supported by Nusrat Shah, the king of Bengal. In another chapter, the author has discussed Babur's relations with the rulers of Persia, Central Asia and Kashghar as also with such Indian Political entities as Kashmir, Sindh, Rajputana, Gujrat and Deccan. The book also contains a critical analysis of Babur's own description of Hindustan, which has been rightly characterized as often brief and superficial but not deliberately distorted.

Notwithstanding the paucity of contemporary evidence, Hasan has presented a useful account of the nature, structure and working of the administrative system implemented by Babur in the conquered territories. In his opinion, Babur was not the head of a tribal confederacy but the monarch of a territorial state; though he followed the '*yasa*' of Chingiz Khan in such insignificant matters as the court etiquette, he was guided by the '*Shariat*' in matters relating to the civil and criminal law. It was from the Timurids that Babur borrowed the structure of his central government which was manned by the *Wazir*, *diwan*, *bakshi* and *diwan-i-buyutat*. The author has done well to describe in detail the functions of a number of minor officials, namely *aishak agha*, *parwanchi*, *shaghawal*, *tawachi*, *yasawal*, *qarawal*, *qurchi*, *bakawal*, *qushbeqi*, *mir akhwai* and *akhta-begi*. Regarding the provincial administration, the author states that Babur's kingdom had been divided into twenty *sarkars* which were further sub-divided into *parganahs*, each *parganah* comprising a number of villages. These administrative divisions were placed under *hakims* and *shiqdars* who were aided by a team of petty functionaries. Most of them were paid by assignments of land revenue called either *wajh* or *wajh-o-istiqamat*, the latter possessing more permanance then the former. In the like manner, religious personages and establishments were given assignments called *madad-i-maash* or *suyurghal*. For example, a *farman* dated 23 August 1527, conferred a village in Batala yielding a revenue of 5000 copper tankas on Qazi Jalal. The author has devoted a section of this chapter to a study of the composition and organisation of Babur's army.

From the above discussion, it would appear that the author has

covered a much familiar ground in his recent work. But the attempt is by no means fruitless. For, the presentation of well-known facts is distinguished by a considerable amount of clarity and freshness. Besides, the author has dared to differ with earlier writers on various issues as is evident from the following examples : i) while describing the third invasion of Babur Hasan rejects the doubts expressed by W.H. McLeod (*Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, pp. 134-35) about Guru Nanak's meeting with the invader, after the sack of Sayyidpur. Being his argument on the *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, he asserts that Babur was impressed by the saintliness of the guru to such an extent that he released the prisoners and restored their property at the latter's intercession. ii) G.N. Sharma's statement (*Mewar and the Mughal emperors*, pp. 18-19) that it was not Rana Sangha but Babur who sought an alliance with the ruler of Mewar in a military offensive against Ibrahim Lodi, does not find favour with Hasan because, in his eyes, the assertion is not only chauvinistic in character but also suffers from lack of any contemporary evidence. iii) Unlike Radhey Shyam (*Babur*, pp. 399-401) Hasan does not attach much importance to Babur's assumption of the title of *padshah* in A.D. 1507, for he had been addressed in that manner even when he had lost all territorial possessions in Central Asia; by adopting this title following his occupations of Kabul and the death of Sultan Husain Baiqara (the seniormost scion of the house of Timur), 'what had been implicit and informal, became explicit and formal.' iv) The author attributes Babur's military success to his fast moving cavalry which was armed with the bow not to his artillery as believed by L.F. Rushbrook Williams (*An Empire Builder of the Sixteenth Century*, p. III); since Babur's fire-arms were clumsy and primitive, they played only a marginal role in deciding the course of an armed engagement.

An added attraction of the book lies in its possession of as many as seven reproductions of paintings (borrowed from the British Library) depicting various aspects of Babur's career, achievements and character. To add to its value, the book contains two maps. The first one depicts the condition of Central Asia as it was in A.D.1530; the second one, though unwieldy in size, shows the extent of Babur's kingdom.

Coming from the pen of well-known historian (who has authored *History of Tipu Sultan* and *Kashmir under the Sultans*, and edited *An Indian Embassy to Constantinople* and *Historians of Medieval India*), the book under review is a welcome addition to the existing literature on the theme. It is hoped that students, researchers and scholars would derive much benefit from it, notwithstanding the printing mistakes found here and there. The publishers of the book should bring out a paper-back edition priced at not more than Rs. 40.

SURINDER SINGH\*

Note : See page 271. Read from line 6 as :  
Wazir Khan, therefore, left the scene. As the last moments  
of the Miyan drew near, he left the cot...

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\*C/o Prof. D.S. Loyal, 2091, Sector 15—C, Chandigarh.

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